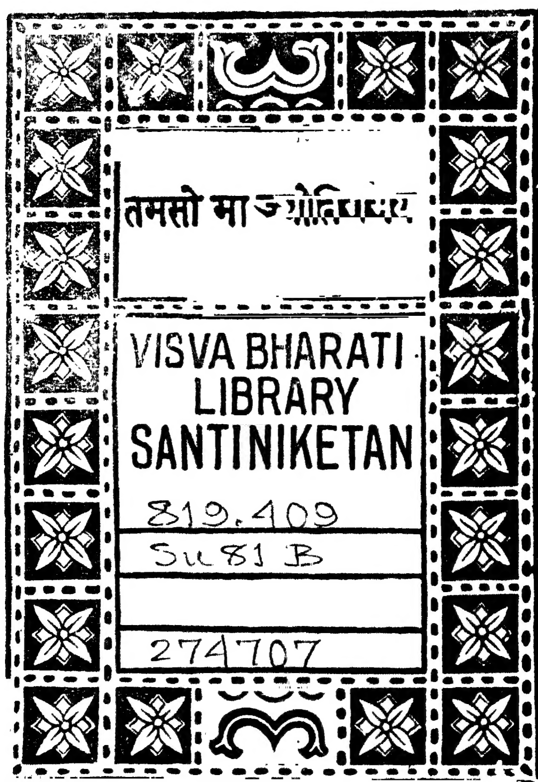

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BENGALI LITERATURE

IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

(1757—1857)

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IN TWO PARTS

(Bound Together)

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TO MY STUDENTS

PAST AND PRESENT

PREFACE

My object in this work has been to give, from a literary point of view, but with a background of social and political history, and from a direct reading of the literature itself, an account of the important period in which, indeed, the obscure origins of modern Bengali literature are to be sought. The volume must not be regarded, however, as a mere store-house of facts; and although presented as an essay of literary and biographical criticism, it may be taken as an historical review of the course of Bengali literature from its decadence after Bhāratchandra's death to its rejuvenation under the British rule.

The large number of quotations from various works scattered throughout the volume, no doubt, swells its length, but I could not always control the length of the illustrative extracts; for each quotation, in order to be illustrative, must be presented as complete in itself. The comparative scarcity of the books from which these passages are taken will, it is hoped, be an ample apology for their length and frequency.

The international method agreed upon by orientalists for transliteration of Sanskrit words has been followed here for Bengali words, with the only exception of using *ch* for *c* (চ). In some cases where the name of a place or a person has got a standardised spelling (as in Chinsurah, Hooghly, Burdwan) I have retained it. I have not distinguished between *va* and *ba* (except in Sanskrit words sometimes), for the distinction is hardly recognised in Bengali either in spelling or pronunciation. The final *a* is generally dropped, as it is passed over generally in pronunciation. We write নীলদর্পণ (Nīladarpaṇa) but we read it as নীল্দর্পণ্ (Nīldarpaṇ).

The second edition has been revised and considerably rewritten, and the history is brought down to 1857 A.D.

Calcutta
19-A Chaudhuri Lane

SUSHIL KUMAR DE

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Part II

BENGALI LITERATURE

IN THE

NINETEENTH CENTURY

(1757-1857)

CHAPTER I

DIVISION OF SUBJECT

The literature produced since the permanence of British rule in Bengal, which is often conveniently described as "modern" literature, has a character of its own, at once brilliant, diverse and complex. To label it in a phrase is not only difficult but often misleading ; for never was there a literature more memorable for its rapid development and its copious and versatile gifts. It can to-day boast of many characteristics, and the central note is lost in the extreme diversity of forms and tendencies exhibited. It is full of vitality and versatility, critical and cultured, intensely personal and self-regulated, apparently defiant of all laws, of standards, of conventions; yet a little reflection will show that in spite of this diversity of styles and motives, this epoch has a character which differentiates it from any other era of Bengali literature. Can we imagine *Kṛṣṇakānter Uil* being published in the age of Bidyāpati or *Nīl-darpaṇ* in that of Bhārat-chandra? How different are the problems of life and character which Kabikaṅkan paints from those we see reflected in the pages of Rabīndranāth! What a new world is that of Michael, Hem, or Nabīn beside that revealed to us by Bijay-gupta, Kṣemānanda, or Rām-prasād ! What wholly different types, ideas and aims, and what wholly different forms of expression! It may not be easy to indicate what these characteristic differences are, but there can be no doubt that our age, although presenting, as it does, instances of a

dozen different styles, certainly possesses its own unmistakable *zeitgeist* in phraseology and substance which distinguishes it from all other ages; and it must be admitted at the outset that modern Bengali literature, as such, has surely a claim for treatment peculiarly suited to itself.

THE YEAR 1800 TAKEN APPROXIMATELY AS THE STARTING POINT OF MODERN LITERATURE

But it would be a difficult problem in social and literary dynamics to fix anything like an exact date for this change in the tone of the literature or to trace it back to its causes. Broadly speaking, the literature began, no doubt, with the permanence of British rule and the spread of western ideas; but these events cover almost a century from 1757 to 1857. The death of Bhārat-chandra in 1760, only three years after Plassey, in which we reach a political and social cause of the great change, is often taken as the typical date; but it might also be contended that the death of Iśvar Gupta in 1858 marks the end of the most effective note in the older current of literature and the beginning of the new era. Yet both these dates, it is obvious, are purely arbitrary points. The modern tone in literature can hardly be detected in any thing written after 1760 till almost half a century elapses; on the other hand, the growth of this new trend in literature may be detected some half a century earlier than 1858, and Īśvar Gupta himself is not wholly free from the new influence. If an approximate date is necessary, it is to be found somewhere in the first quarter of the 19th century ; and the year 1800 is usually, and may be roughly, taken to be the starting point. But it must be borne in mind that such approximation of a date is intended, more or less, to facilitate classification. Some misguided critic has been induced to baptise this era of literature as the Victorian age. Such a nomenclature is not only mistaken but also misleading; for, as put by a well-known critic, "neither reigns nor years, nor centuries, nor any arbitrary measure of time in the gradual evolution of

thought can be exactly applied, or have any formative influence. A period of so many years, having some well-known name by which it can be labelled, is a mere artifice of classification."[1] Subject to this caution, we may take 1800 to be the starting point in the new era of Bengali literature.

But the historian of literature cannot overlook the long dead-season of fifty years which preceded the year 1800 ; for work of another kind was being accomplished in these apparently barren years. From the battle of Plassey to the beginning of the 19th century, mighty revolutions were occurring not only in the political and social but also in the literary history of Bengal. In an historical study of literature, the far-reaching significance of these years cannot surely be ignored. On the other hand, although the first half of the 19th century till 1858 is comparatively barren from a strictly literary point of view, yet this was the formative period of modern literature, and the early devoted labours of the various European and Indian writers, however tentative, had sown the seeds which, when the time came, broke into the rich and lovely growths of modern times.

DIVISION INTO PERIODS

We, therefore, propose, taking 1800 A.D. to be roughly the year of commencement, to discuss and decide, first of all, by way of introduction, the question of origins, with a preliminary recapitulation of the causes and circumstances, political, social and literary, which led to the beginning of modern literature. This will involve a cursory review of the period between 1757 and 1800 in its various aspects, and its bearing upon literature. From 1800, the year of the foundation of the Fort William College and the formation of the Śrīrāmpur Mission, to 1825, the year of the publication of the last volume of Carey's *Dictionary* and the laying of the foundation-stone of the Hindu College, we have a period of

1 Frederic Harrison, *Studies in Early Victorian Literature*, p. 2.

very great importance in our literature from an historical rather than a literary point of view ; for we are concerned here with the early beginnings of our literature, with the labours of the Missionaries and their Indian colleagues and with the early efforts, public and private, for the spread of English education in Bengal. From 1825 to 1858, the year of the death of Īśvar Gupta and the first appearance of Michael's dramas, followed within five years by the publication of *Tilottamā*, *Nīl-darpaṇ* and *Durgeś-nandinī*, we are in a transitional period of great ferment on every side, during which the country, awakened to new energies, was struggling to break fresh ground by assimilating the wealth of new ideas now brought before it. All the greatest strifes, social, religious, and literary were fought, though not completely won, during this period of awakened activity. The problem of English education now decisively settled, the triumph of the West was fully proclaimed; and the literature as well as the society, in trying to adjust itself to this new order of things, began to take a distinctly new tone and colour. This was the era of the Reforming Young Bengal. The various plentiful, but inferior, literature produced during these years in which new experiments were tried, new veins of thought opened, a new public and a new order of writers created, prepared the way for the great flood-tide which began with 1860. From the latter date we have a third epoch of great fertility, brilliant achievement and high promise, during which all the older ideas of life and literature were being revolutionised and transmuted into things better suited to the needs of the new era. The Literary Young Bengal came to take the lead.

Our enquiry in the following pages will be chiefly confined to the tracing of the origins, to the well-meant but scarcely fruitful activity of the pioneer authors who range over a seemingly dull and barren period at the commencement of our literary history from 1800 to 1857 A.D.

CHAPTER II

INTRODUCTORY RETROSPECT

CIRCA. 1760-1800

Taking 1800 A.D. to be roughly the date of commencement of the modern era of Bengali Literature, we find, however, that it is not until nearly half a century elapses that we come across any literature strictly deserving the name. In the meantime if we pause for a moment and look at the political history of the country and the general condition of the people, from 1760 to the beginning of the 19th century, we shall find that it was an age in which we can hardly expect any quiet development of literature under favourable political and social conditions. It will be profitable at the outset to study here, however briefly, the general history of the period in relation to its literature ; for every history of literature should always have a back-ground of political and social history.

RISE AND GROWTH OF THE ENGLISH POWER

The political history of Bengal in the latter half of the 18th century is essentially the history of the rise, growth and gradual establishment of British rule. The so-called battle of 1757 is usually and popularly regarded as marking a turning point in the history of Bengal ; but it is well-known that this petty rout,[1] usually glorified with the association of undying military renown, was not directly productive of any fresh privilege to the English power; nor did it, in itself, affect the political destiny of the country. Clive himself did not perhaps know what he had won, although later on his tendency to exaggerate the value of his services led him to magnify his

1 So designated by Lyall, *Rise and Progress of the British Dominion in India*, 1898 p. 107. See Hill, *Bengal in 1756-57*, I. ccii and cciii ; also III. 212 ; Firminger, *Introduction to the Fifth Report*, Vol. I, p. i-iii, and references cited therein.

achievements ; nor did the servants of the Company, at that time, attach much importance to this incident ; still less were they aware of any definite act of conquest usually associated with this battle. "The general idea" writes Luke Scrafton, who had intimate knowledge of English affairs in 1757, "at this time entertained by the servants of the Company was that the battle of Plassey did only restore us to the same situation we were in before the capture of Calcutta ; the Subah was conceived to be as independent as ever, and the English returned into their commercial character[1]". No fresh commercial privileges were asked of Mīr Jā'far, nor were any wanted by the Company who were content with the terms granted to them in 1716[2]. As yet there was hardly any important acquisition of territory by the Company who, more mindful of their commercial interests than anything else, chose to seek umbrage under the shadow of the Muhammedan power, itself declining. Even in 1765, Clive flattered himself that he had "revived the power of the Great Mughal;"[3] and for a long time after Plassey, whatever territory the Company held, it held not on terms of military conquest but as a grant from a superior Muhammedan power. There was, no doubt, a fiction involved in all these proceedings—a masquerade as Clive chose to describe it—yet the English at this time held ground in Bengal chiefly as trader and secondarily as revenue-collector under the Mughal emperor. The term "British Empire in India" obtained currency from its first bold use in 1772 by Warren Hastings, who for the first time disclosed a greater imperial ambition; but the possession of the sovereign rights by the Nawāb was still recognised, and the long debate,

1 Luke Scrafton, *Observations on Mr. Vansittart's Narrative*, p. 2.

2 Vansittart, *A Narrative of the Transactions in Bengal*, vol. i. p. 24. The treaty with Mīr Jā'far is given in Aitchison, *Collection of Treaties etc.* Vol. I, p. 186 ; also H. Verelst, *View of the Rise and Present State of English Government of Bengal*, London 1772, p. 143-44.

3 Letter of the Governor and Select Committee to the Court, Sep. 30, 1765, quoted in Firminger, *op. cit.* p. viii.

vehemently carried on in the Court and on the Council Board, on the question of sovereignty in Bengal, would go to show how little the English trading company at this time was conscious of any conquest of the country by its military power, and how greatly it was conscious of the instability of its own footing.

COMMERCIALISM AS THE DOMINATING FACTOR IN THE COMPANY'S POLICY

Though Plassey cannot be directly credited to have brought into being the British empire in Bengal, yet the great empire of the Mughal and its subahdār-ship in Bengal were gradually breaking down. The period between 1757 and 1765 witnessed also the downfall of French commercial settlements, which left Bengal open to the English. In spite of these and other opportunities, it took nearly half a century, however, for the British rule to establish itself firmly in Bengal. One of the chief reasons for this was that, during these years, commercialism was the dominating factor in the policy of the Directors of the Company ; and it was by slow degrees that they departed from their original commercial position. About the time of Clive's second mission, no doubt, a schism arose in the Court of Directors which heralded a fundamental change in the character of the Company. One party was for trade alone, the other supported Clive in his proposal to accept the Dewānī and thus incur responsibility of government. In 1761, the Court wrote to its agents in India, declaring that trade was to be combined with "warfare, fortification, military prudence, and political government[1]". But this military precaution was urged chiefly for the protection of trade. Although the break-up of the Muhammedan rule was beginning to offer vast opportunities to the trader to become a soldier and politician, the Court always

1 Quoted in F. P. Robinson, *The Trade of the East India Company*, Cambridge 1912, p. 67.

insisted upon an attitude of non-intervention and peremptorily disapproved, on more than one occasion, the intention of its agents for territorial acquisition when such a step did not also extend their sales and profits.

SLOW AND GRADUAL ACQUISITION OF POWER

It was by slow degrees, therefore, that the company of calculating shop-keepers turned into earnest empire-builders. Gradually they began to acquire zemindary rights, monopolise revenue, assume civil control, and step by step exclude the Muhammedan government by destroying its financial and military supremacy. This long process of gradually exhausting and appropriating the functions of the existing government which, however, meant, as it did, half a century of misery to the people, first began with the grant of the districts of Burdwan, Midnapur and Chittagong in 1760. The necessities of revenue administration compelled the Company to build up a system of internal government and consolidate its military power ; but it was not till the grant of the Dewānī in 1765 that it began to obtain a complete control over finance, over the administration of civil justice, and over the entire military defence of the country. The accession to the Dewānī which however, was declined by the Directors on a former occasion, imposed upon the British traders the duties of administration. They began to exercise every prerogative of the sovereign save that of criminal justice.[1]

STATE OF BENGAL UNDER DOUBLE GOVERNMENT

But even then, though real masters of the country, they preferred to wear the mask of double government. By this device, to all the abuses of the ancient system of government were superadded all the evils of a new system of divided authority. The people grew uncertain as to where

1 Field, *Regulations of the Bengal Code*, Calcutta 1875, Introd. p. 4.

their obedience was due. The Nawāb, though theoretically left in his full glory as subahdār, was, in the language of Clive, "a shadow" and "a name", and was deprived of every independent military and financial support of his executive. The Hon'ble Company, on the other hand, though actual sovereigns, pretended to be nothing more than mere passive receivers of profits and revenues, and the shadow of the Nawāb was a convenient covering for all their acts of exaction and oppression. The country was placed under extensive misrule. The individual British adventurer, in the service of the Company, brought up since the days of Clive in the tradition of aggression, dethronement, spoliation and extortion, considered high-handed proceedings to be his time-honoured privilege, grown out of the anomalous way in which the British power came into being. These servants of the Company, abroad with a nominal salary, were coming home laden with such colossal fortune, often acquired with no clean hands, that the 'Indian Nabob' became a scandalously proverbial term. Every vice, which is the offspring of unlimited authority and insatiable avarice, flourished unchecked. The papers relating to the conduct of the Company's servants and their underlings on the whole question of internal trade, of receiving presents, and other corrupt and pernicious practices, remain as an indelible blot in the early records of the Company's history.

WHAT IT MEANT TO THE COUNTRY

It is not easy to imagine today what suffering this meant to the country. The anarchical state in which the provinces were placed not only contributed powerfully to its impoverishment but it absolutely dissolved government of the country so far as the protection of the people was concerned. The truculent Muhammedan or the Mahratha was, in his day, a tyrant from fitful caprice, from lax police and unchecked violence. But the cold calculating Anglo-Indian was a tyrant from prescience ; and his tyranny, with his superior

shrewdness and power of organisation, was a system in itself which extending, as it did, to every village market and every manufacturer's loom, touched the trades, the occupations, and the lives of the people very closely. His commercial cupidity, under a system of monopoly and coercion, deprived the country of those sources of wealth, of "those rights of free production and free barter which they had enjoyed under good and bad government alike."[1] The consequences were too evidently exemplified in the ruin of the entire inland trade and manufacture, in the decline of agriculture under oppressive systems of land-settlements, in the diminution of the specie, and in the general distress of the poor. The reputation of the English was so bad in Bengal that no sooner did a European come into one of the villages "than all the shops were immediately locked up and all the people for their own safety ran away."[2] "The sources of tyranny and oppression" said Clive in his memorable letter to the Directors "which have been opened by the European agents acting under the authority of the Company's servants and the numberless black agents and sub-agents, acting also under them, will, I fear, be a lasting reproach to the English name in this country."[3] In 1772, the Select Committee express themselves bound "to lay open to the view of the Directors a series of transactions too notoriously known to be suppressed, and too affecting to their interest, to the character and to the existence of the Company in Bengal, to escape unnoticed and uncensured; transactions which seem to demonstrate that every spring of their government was smeared with corruption; that principles of rapacity and oppression universally prevailed, and that every spark of sentiment and public spirit was lost and extinguished in the

1 R. C. Dutt, *India under Early British rule* (*Economic History*), London 1908, p. 27 and pp. 30-31.

2 *Memoirs of a Gentleman who resided for several years in the East Indies*, quoted in Robinson, *op. cit.*, p. 70.

3 Clive's Letter to the Directors, dated Sep. 30th, 1765 (*Third Report*, App. p. 391 et. seq.)

unbounded lust of unmerited wealth."[1] Even Hastings[2] declared as early as 1762 that "the country people are habituated to entertain the most unfavourable notion of our government"; and Verelst[3] asked in 1772 "How could we make the sordid interests of the trader consistent with that unbiased integrity which must reconcile the natives to a new dominion?" Nothing would be a more apt and incising description of the miserable state of the country than the celebrated simile of the author of the *Seir Mutaqherin*[4] in which he compares it to the predicament of an untenanted house infested by robbers but having no master to protect it.

THE PRIVATE MORALS OF THE COMPANY'S SERVANTS

The Anglo-Indian society, itself degraded, made light of such unrighteous proceedings: and the private morals of the Company's servants were no better than their public conduct. Hastings and Sir Philip Francis lived in open adultery; and extravagant rumours were afloat with respect to the latter's card-winnings. The morals of the majority of the Company's servants were truthfully, if grossly, portrayed in the weekly Hicky's *Gazette*[5], published a hundred years ago; and it is well-known that this notorious paper, itself conducted by one of "the most objectionable rowdy that ever landed in Calcutta", was ruined by incurring Hastings' displeasure for making public the strictly private arrangement by which the wife of the German adventurer and portrait-painter had become the wife of the great Governor-General. Sunday was not only given up to horse-racing, card-gambling

1 *Third Report*, 1772, App. No. 86.

2 Hastings' Letter, dated April 25, 1762 quoted in R. C. Dutt, *op. cit.*, p. 22.

3 Verelst, *op. cit.*, p. 62.

4 *Seir Mutaqherin*, iii. 185.

5 Busteed. *Echoes from Old Calcutta*, 1888, gives many specimens; see p. 171 et. seq. (ch. vii.); see also pp. 109-170 on the social life of the Anglo-Indians.

and masquerades, but "Sunday afternoons" we are told "as well as the early morning before the sun was too high in the heavens, were frequently taken advantage of to get rid of the accumulated evil passions roused between gentlemen, who might be seen, commonly enough, furnished with swords and pistols, wending their way in palanquins towards Tolly's Nullah, as it enters the Hooghly, to settle their little differences after the manner of Hastings and Francis; and they not unfrequently returned with a pistol-bullet or a sword-thrust as a memento of their outing and a remembrance of the region of Kidderpore."[1]

THE ADMINISTRATIVE POLICY OF THE COMPANY'S GOVERNMENT

It cannot be denied that the Company's Directors were trying their best to put down this state of things and were consistently condemning in unequivocal terms the conduct and character of their servants; yet the policy of the Company's government itself was a faithful reflection of its narrow commercial views. In order to enhance the value of his services, Clive had propagated the pernicious belief that India overflowed with riches, and the servants of the Company kept up this tradition by furnishing perpetually flattering accounts of their affairs in India.[2] Notwithstanding a knowledge of the pecuniary embarrassments of the Company, the inadequacy of the revenues, and the exhaustion of the treasury, the Directors were compelled,

1 In 1793 was published a book entitled "Thoughts on Duelling" by a "writer in the Hon'ble Company's Service" with a view to ascertain its origin and effect on society. (Seton-Karr, *Selection from Calcutta Gazette* ii, 564). See also *Good Old Days of Hon'ble John Company*, ch. xxiii and xxx. On the profanation of Sunday, see the Letter of the Directors (1798) and the proclamation of the G.-G. Nov. 9, 1798, quoted *op. cit.* ii, p. 36-37.

2 J. Mill, *Hist. of India*, ed. H. H. Wilson (London 1840-45) iii. 432. Mill records that "the inflated conceptions of the nation at large multiplied the purchasers of India stock: and it rose as high as 263 per cent."

by the glorious promises so confidently made of unbounded treasures from India, to take to the desperate course of declaring from time to time impossible dividends, which had to be kept up by corrupt means and severe exactions but which involved the affairs of the Company in further financial difficulties. This had the effect of subordinating the Court of Proprietors more and more to the influence of the stock-brokers. The extraordinary disclosure of misgovernment, the deficiency of the Company's funds, its actual state of indebtedness, and the violent allegations of corrupt conduct which the Directors and their agents mutually threw upon one another raised some ferment in England and ultimately led to legislative interference. From 1774, the affairs of the Company frequently received the attentions of Parliament, and the efforts of Sir Philip Francis succeeded in carrying the judgment of the Company's internal administration from the Court of the Directors to the bar of public opinion in England. But this intervention of Parliament was due more to partisan animosity than to "any statesman-like desire to provide India with a better form of government." From Cornwallis's time, however, the adminisiration of India was placed not, as hitherto had been done, in the hands of one of the Company's servants on the ground of local experience but in those of an English nobleman of elevated rank, unfettered by all local ties ; yet it must be admitted that there was hardly existing any definite rule of administration except that which descended to it from its commercial institutions, nor any rule of policy but that which the accident of the day supplied.[1] The administration yet remained to be organised and the political power to be consolidated. Verelst, at the end of 1769, had already called attention to the feebleness and want of system in the government at Fort William ; and

1 Marshman, *History of India*, vol. ii, p. 4.

2 Verelst, *op. cit.* App. p. 124.

the case of Hastings *versus* Francis, revealed by the state-papers, is a memorable testimony to the weakness of the central government, so strongly denounced by the author of the *Seir Mutaqherin*.[1] The beginning of the nineteenth century saw a disappearance of some of these evils, no doubt, yet in other respects, it witnessed no material improvement. The inevitable conviction, referred to by Francis as a state of "delirium", which took hold of almost every English official in those days was that the Dewānī lands were an inexhaustible estate for the profits of the Company, and that every conceivable method should be brought to bear upon the object of making India pay; this was declared in official language as "keeping up the revenue". Efficiency of government was judged by the standard of net gain, "by the coarse and ready method of calculating, in pies and gundas, the increase and decrease of the revenue."[2] If we study the schemes of reform, formulated from time to time, we find that they were framed not so much in the interest of the people as in the interest of the commercial rulers of Bengal, to which everything else was sacrificed.

ITS OPPOSITION TO LIGHT AND FREEDOM

Indeed the Hon'ble Company, at home and in India, had reached that depth of opposition to light and freedom which justifies even Burke's extremest passages. Ignorance was the talisman on which their power over the people and the safety of their possessions in India were supposed to depend; and to dispel this popular ignorance by diffusing knowledge and education, by introducing missionaries and schoolmasters, by permitting freedom of public criticism was fantastically considered to be "the most absurd and suicidal measure that could be devised." It was not until Wellesley's time that it was thought "god-like bounty to bestow expansion of

1 *Seir Mutaqherin*, vol. iii. p. 185 et seq.

2 Firminger, *op. cit.* p. ccxv.

intellect[1]". But even then no healthy public criticism was allowed or suffered upon the acts of government, although it must be admitted that the Press, which dates its birth in India since 1780, had hardly yet risen from the low level of a vile, scurrilous and abusive print. The Śrīrāmpur Missionaries could not land or settle anywhere in Bengal except under the protection of the Danish flag, and when they had set up there a printing press or planned the first vernacular newspaper, they were afraid of government interference, and had to obtain special permission from Lord Wellesley. Even later, the cases of William Duane of the *Indian World* and of the notorious James Silk Buckingham of the *Calcutta Journal* (Oct. 2. 1818), who were both arrested and deported to England in the most high-handed manner, would be enough to indicate the impatient and uncompromising attitude of government towards fearless independence and plain-speaking. From time to time, however, attempts were made to liberalise the Company's rule ; but each measure taken was too slow and too late to save it from the nemesis of 1857 and extinction in 1858.

EFFECT ON THE SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC CONDITION OF BENGAL

The effect of these political changes and of this administrative policy on the social and economic condition of Bengal was very deep and far-reaching. Thirty years had passed in vacillation between the Company as the Dewān and the Nawāb as the Nāzim during which, as we have seen, the country suffered from endless disorders and abuses of political government. Grasping and mercenary spirit made the so-called guardians of the people inaccessible to the plainest dictates of reason, justice and policy, and infused in them a total contempt for public welfare. The evils of an alien rule were aggravated by a deep ignorance of the manners and

1 Wellesley, Address to the Students of the Fort William College, (in Roebuck's *Annals of Fort William College*, p. 493).

customs of the people and by a singular want of identification with their interests,—two articles which, as Ghulām Husain rightly comments,[1] are the principles of all union and attachment, of all regulation and settlement between the governor and the governed.

DISSOLUTION OF THE MUHAMMEDAN GOVERNMENT ; ITS EFFECT

During these years, the Muhammedan government itself was coming to an inglorious end. The situation of Mīr Jā'far was deplorable from the first. Old, indolent, voluptuous, endowed with many incurable vices, he made a very poor figure-head; and with an exhausted treasury, on the one hand, and vast engagements to discharge, on the other, he was driven to severest exactions. While his cruelties made him detestable, negligence, disorder and weakness of his government exposed him to contempt. Mīr Kāsim was a more capable monarch, and Vansittart[2] pays a well-deserved tribute to his administration. Careful as he was of giving offence to the English, he could not help coming into conflict with them ; for, as Vansittart says, "scarce a day passed but occasion was taken from the most trifling pretences to trample on his Government, to seize his officers and to insult them with threats and invectives." The executive power and control over criminal justice were still left in the hands of the Nawāb, whose sovereign authority was acknowledged; yet the Muhammedan government, under the dual system, had much reason to complain of their want of influence in the country which was "torn to pieces by a set of rascals, who in Calcutta walked in rags, but when they were sent out on gomastahships, lorded it over the country, imprisoning the ryots and merchants, and writing and talking in the most

1 *Seir Mutaqherin*, iii. 161.

2 Vansittart, *op. cit.* iii. 381.

insolent and domineering manner to the fouzdars and officers[1]." And this was not confined to a particular spot. "It would amaze you," writes Mr. Senior, Chief at Kasimbazar, "the number of complaints that daily come before me of the extravagancies committed by our agents and gomastahs all over the country[2]." Although the Company had now become actually possessed of more than one half of the Nawāb's revenue, yet the latter was continually harrassed by oppressive exactions and became "no more than a banker for the Company's servants who could draw upon him [meaning presents] as often and to as great an amount as they pleased[3]," Naturally the Nawāb had to fall back upon the old method of raising from the zemindars what he had himself to render to his new masters ; and the tradition of the royal oppression of zemindars, handed down from the days of Murshid Kulī Khān, of which vivid pictures will be found in the pages of the *Riazoo-s-Salatin* or the *Seir Mutaqherin*, was revived in the last days of the Muhammedan government in Bengal. The situation is vividly, if too sweepingly, narrated thus by Verelst: "The violence of Meer Cassim in accumulating treasure and the relaxation of Government in the hands of Meer Jafter equally contributed to confound all order, and by removing every idea of right, sanctified in some sort the depredations of the hungry collectors. The feeble restraint of fear produced little effect ; while the increasing necessities of a master afforded at least a pretence of an uncontrolled exercise of power throughout every department. Inferior officers employed in the collections were permitted to establish

1 Letter of Mr. Gray, President at Maldah, dated January 1764, quoted in Verelst, *op. cit.* iii. p. 49 ; see also the Nawāb's Letter, quoted in Vansittart, *op. cit.* iii. 381.

2 Letter of Mr. Senior, Chief at Kasimbazar, quoted in Verelst, *op. cit.* p. 49.

3 Clive's speech, dated March 30, 1772, in Almon's *Debates*, x. 14 ; see also Mill, *op. cit.* iii. 354 et seq. In 1767, Lord Clive's own income was calculated to be at least £96,000.

a thousand modes of taxation. Fines were levied at pleasure without regard to justice; and while each felt in his turn the iron rod of oppression, he redoubled these extortions on all beneath him. The war in which Meer Jaffar was engaged against foreign enemies, the struggles of Meer Cassim, which ended with his destruction, and the usurpations of foreign traders completed the scene of universal confusion[1]."

CONDITION OF THE ZEMINDAR

Thus the zemindars, unable to make any headway against the exorbitant demand and oppression of the Nawāb, on the one hand, and of the Company's official Nawābs, on the other, were gradually sinking out of sight lost in obscurity. Those who survived came out of the struggle, impoverished and degraded. These hereditary landlords had held the soil from very ancient times with quasi-feudal powers and virtually ruled the people within their own estates. Inspite of the severe strictures of Ghulām Hussain[2] that the zemindars are, at all times and in all ages, a race incorrigible, it can be easily shown that the ancient zemindars as a class did much for the good of the country. They maintained order, settled disputes, administered justice, and punished crimes; they encouraged religion and rewarded piety; they fostered arts and learning and were patrons of literature. But the iron hand of the new system brought ruin upon this hereditary aristocracy. The total change, in the management of the revenue, had brought in an innovation by which property, along with its administration, not only changed hands but was placed on a new foundation, and thus deeply affected the condition, individually as well as collectively, of the people of Bengal. The system, introduced in the ceded districts, ignored the customary rights of the zemindars and sold their estates by public auction for increasing the revenue.

1 Verelst, *op. cit.* p. 66.

2 *Seir Mutaqherin* iii, p. 204 *et seq.*

The result was most lamentable. The lands were let out for a short term of three years to the highest bidder at the auction sale. "Men without fortune or character" we are told "became bidders at the sale ; and while some of the former farmers, unwilling to relinquish their habitations, exceeded perhaps the real value in their offers, those who had nothing to lose advanced yet further, wishing at all events to obtain an immediate possession. Thus, numberless harpies were let loose to plunder whom the spoil of a miserable people enabled to complete the first year's payment. The renters under so precarious a tenure could not venture to encourage inferior farmers by advancing money, which is seldom repaid within three years; and without the advance, even the implements of husbandry were wanting to cultivate the lands."[1] Even the appointment of supravisors in 1769 in the appropriate districts, and the two councils, one at Murshidabad and the other at Patna, did not work any improvement. The Committee of the House of Commons could not help remarking: "Seven years had elapsed from the acquisition of the Dewani, without the government deeming itself competent to remedy the defects."[2] The reports of the supravisors themselves, consisting mostly of antiquarian or statistical essays, represent the government as having attained the last stage of oppressiveness and barbarism.

CONDITION OF THE RYOT AND THE CULTIVATOR

It is needless to comment on the condition of the ryot and the cultivator under this system. In a country subject to disorder and revolution, infinite varieties prevailed, as Hunter points out, in the administration of the separate districts. Some districts were under the immediate jurisdiction of the subahdār; while in others the hereditary zemindar

1 Verelst, *op. cit.* pp. 70-71.

2 *Fifth Report*, p. 4. et seq. Also see *Sixth Report* of 1782, App. i; Colebrooke's *Supplement to the Digest of Bengal Regulations*, pp, 174-190.

preserved the appearance of power, although the jealousy of the subahdār and an increased taxation left to him little more than a nominal authority. The country laboured under the disorders of unbounded despotism.

EFFECT OF THE GREAT FAMINE 1769-70

To add to this, a great national disaster occurred in the terrible famine of 1769-70 which destroyed ten to twelve millions of human beings. Even before 1769, high prices had given indication of an approaching famine but the tax was collected as rigorously as ever.[1] The suffering of the people was heightened so much by the acts of the Company's agents and sub-agents that the Court of Directors indignantly condemned their method of "profitting by universal distress."[2] Hastings, writing in 1772, sets down the loss of population "at least of one-third of the inhabitants of the province"; and even twenty years later, Cornwallis officially described one-third of Bengal left as a jungle, inhabited only by wild beasts. The English knew very little about the country at that time and did less for its inhabitants. Even state-charity was grudged, and land-tax was as rigorous as ever. Hastings points out in 1772 that "notwithstanding the loss of at least one-third of the inhabitants of the province, and the consequent decrease of the cultivation, the nett collections of the year 1771 exceeded even those of 1768." In 1771, one-third of the culturable land was returned in the public accounts as "deserted"; in 1776, the entries in this column exceeded to one-half of

1 Hunter, *Annals of Rural Bengal*, p. 20-21 ; also pp. 399-404.

2 Firminger, *op. cit.* p. cxcix: See also Letter to Bengal dated August, 28, 1771, quoted in Auber, *op. cit.* pp. 354-55. It is difficult to say how far the famine was due to an intentional "cornering" of the grain or similar unscrupulous commercial transactions ; but this was the widely prevalent complaint, and Stavorinus (vol. I. p. 853) ascribes the famine partly to the "monopoly which the English had made of the rice."

the whole district, four acres lying waste to every seven. But the Company increased its demands from less than £100,000 in 1772 to close on £112,000 in 1776.[1] One-third of the generation of peasants had been swept away and a whole generation of once rich families had been reduced to indigence. The revenue-farmers who had been unable to realise the tax were stripped of their office, shorn of their lands, and thrown ultimately into prison. The zemindars who had hitherto lived like semi-independent chiefs, fared worse[2]; and Sir William Hunter rightly remarks that "from the year 1770, the ruin of the two-thirds of the old aristocracy of Lower Bengal dates."

The great Famine also deeply affected the relation of the tenant to the landlord and of the landlords to one another. Nearly one-third of Bengal fell out of tillage; and the scarcity of cultivators, at a time when there was more land than men to till it, gave the ryot an advantage over the zemindar, who was now compelled to court the peasant and make him tempting offers. This not only led to the growth of two classes of resident and non-resident ryots and to a constant friction between them, but it also added to the general misery by fostering violent feuds and quarrels among landed proprietors who had eagerly begun to bid against one another for the husbandman. These armed feuds between the landlords very greatly disturbed the repose of the districts[3], and it is no wonder that the zemindars are described in contemporary records as "continual disturbers of the peace of the province".

PREVALENCE OF ROBBERY AND DACOITY

From the time of this Famine also, robbery and dacoity became disastrously prevalent. Large tracts of land around

1 Hunter, *op. cit.* pp. 63-64.

2 Hunter (*op. cit.* p. 56 ff.) cites the well-known cases of the Maharaja of Burdwan, the Raja of Nadia, and Rani Banwari of Rajshahi.

3 Hunter, *op. cit.*, pp. 60-61, p. 85.

every village grew into thick jungles which fostered not only wild beasts but gave umbrage to terrible gangs of robbers. Besides the numerous and prosperous classes like the *thugs*, who practised robbery as a hereditary calling, and the bands of cashiered soldiers who turned vagrants, there were thousands of people who were driven by destitution to the desperate course of plundering; and from 1771 the suppression of these lawless sects, who sometimes roved about the country in armies many thousands strong,[1] was a matter of serious consideration to the Council. Organised outrages took place within an ear-shot from the seat of government. Long records how in 1780 a very terrible case of robbery, accompanied by incendiarism and violence, occurred in Calcutta in which about 15,000 houses were burnt down and nearly 200 people were killed.[2] Dacoity and robbery, with all its incidental terrors, prevailed in Bengal for more than three quarters of a century,[3] and left the life and property of the people absolutely insecure.

THE SYSTEM OF CRIMINAL AND CIVIL JUSTICE

The ancient police system, whether it consisted of the village watchman, or of the *nugdees*, or of the

1 See a graphic account of the effects of dacoity in the Regulation of 1772 (35th Reg.), quoted in Colebrooke's *Supplement to the Digest* pp. 1-13. Also see Hunter, *op. cit.* pp. 69 *et seq.*

2 Long, *Calcutta in Olden Time*, p. 37. See also Busteed, *op. cit.* p. 157 ; *Good Old Days*, ch. xviii ; Seton-Karr, *op. cit.* ii. 213-14, 233; Forrest, *Selections from State Papers relating to Warren Hastings, (1772-85)* in 3vols. Calcutta 1890, ii. 289.

3 Kaye (*Administration of the East India Company*, III. ii and iii) gives an account of Thuggee and Dacoity in later years. Even as late as 1810, we find Lord Minto (Minute, dated Nov. 24, 1810) writing, "A monstrous and disorganised state of society existed under the eye of the supreme British authorities and almost at the very seat of the Government.........The people are perishing almost in our sight: every week's delay is a doom of slaughter and torture against the defenceless inhabitants of very populous countries."

thānādārs, as we find in the Bengal of 1760, was in a disorganised state when the English came into power, and was quite insufficient for the preservation of peace or of the apprehension of thieves and gang-robbers. There was collusion with the criminals not only on the part of the petty zemindars, as the early administrators of Bengal tell us, but also on the part of these regularly constituted keepers of the public peace.[1] To meet the disorders of the country, the Faujdārī system was established in 1774 ; but it is well-known how vigorously the system was criticised by the opposition members of the Council and condemned as oppressive by the author of the *Seir Mutaqherin*[2]. It was candidly admitted by the Resolution of April 6, 1786, that the establishment of faujdārs and thānadārs "has by experience been found not to produce the good effects intended by the institution". On the old division of authority between the Nāzim and the Dewān, the executive power including crinimal administration was allotted to the Nāzim, while the Dewān possessed the civil jurisdiction. The establishment of two courts of justice, the Dewānī and the Faujdārī 'Ādālat, which were controlled by the superior Sadar Dewānī and Nizāmat 'Ādālats at the Presidency of Fort William, was made by the Regulations of the Committee of Circuit[3] chiefly on the basis on this old distinction. One of the effects of the Regulations referred to was to transfer the Courts of Appeal from Murshidabad to Calcutta and to give the Collector the right to preside over local civil courts and keep vigilance over the local criminal courts; yet the criminal jurisdiction of the Nawāb was not

1 The greater zemindars had always a large number of troops at their disposal, and sometimes the village watchman was enrolled on the establishment of the zemindars. They were employed not only in their original capacity but also in the collection of the revenue. Extensive duties similarly were expected from the Faujdār.

2 *Seir Mutaqherin*, iii. pp. 176-179. See *Fifth Report*, pp. 43 et seq.

3 Colebrooke, *op. cit.* 1-14 ; also quoted and discussed in Firminger, *op. cit.* pp. ccxxi. et seq.

taken away nor were miscarriages of justice and long-felt abuses removed by these Regulations. The establishment, for the Mayor's Court, of the Supreme Court in Calcutta, to which Francis was so stoutly opposed, brought again in its train a number of notorious evils, and one need hardly recall Macaulay's account of the high-handed proceedings of this Court. It was not until 1790 that the superintendence of criminal justice throughout the province was accepted by the English[1], but judicial administration was not placed upon a sound footing until many years elapsed. Even in 1793, the preamble to the several Regulations of that year show that there must have been much confusion, abuse of justice, delay in procedure, and uncertainty of jurisdiction in civil and criminal courts.

REFORMS OF 1793

The reforms of Cornwallis were not only in the right direction in these respects but they also struck a note of sympathy with the poor suffering ryot. But the ruin of the zemindars, begun by Mīr Kāsim and hastend by the *ijārā* settlement, was finally completed by the celebrated measure of 1793 which, though it did credit to the benevolent intentions of Cornwallis, proved at least for the time being disastrous to many an ancient aristocratic family of Bengal. It would be out of place to discuss here this measure in all its bearings,[2] but it must be admitted that it was not only insufficient in affording protection to the ryot against the rack-renting power of the zemindar but it also became the means of *unsettling* many old zemindaries. It created a class of landlords destitute for the most part of public spirit and

1 Cornwallis's Minute, December 3, 1790 ; also Regulation V and IX of 1793. Also *Fifth Report*, pp. 29-42: Seton-Karr, *Cornwallis*, pp. 88-94.

2 See on this question Field, *op. cit* ; Harrington's *Analysis* ; Seton-Karr, *Cornwallis*, ch. ii ; *Fifth Report*, p. 12 *et. seq* ; Mill, *op. cit.* Bk. vi ch. 5-6 ; R. C. Dutt, *op. cit.* ch. v, etc.

higher culture. The principle of the permanence of assessment, co-operating with splendid fertility of the Ganges valley, afforded, no doubt, a happy prospect of peaceful multiplication of the people and spread of civilisation, yet the wealthy ancient aristocracy, which for a long time constituted the main support of society and great patron of arts and literature, was slowly breaking down under the stringent rules which put up their large estates to public auction at the mercy of the highest bidder. The class of upstart zemindars who stepped into their place could not be expected to possess the same inherited tradition of culture and refinement as marked the ancient aristocracy of the land. Side by side with these, there was created another class of landlords by the very measure itself; for under the new law, the mere collector of the revenue was, in many cases, invested with every proprietory right in the land.

MORAL DEPRAVITY OF THE PERIOD

Before passing from this cursory account of the dissolution of the Muhammedan government and the ruin of the zemindars, it would not be out of place to refer to the depraved moral influence of the Muhammedan court upon the courts of the noblemen and also upon society in general. The vivid pages of the *Seir Mutaqherin* has already made familiar to us the depth of luxury, debauchery and moral depravity of the period, and Ghulām Hussain in one place offers a few bitter remarks on the ethicality of Murshidabad.[1] "It must be observed" he says "that in those days Moorshoodabad wore very much the appearance of one of Loth's towns; and it is still pretty much the same to-day..........Nay, the wealthy and powerful, having set apart sums of money for these sorts of amours, used to show the way and to entrap and seduce the unwary, the poor and the feeble; and as the proverb says—*so is the king, so becomes his people,*—these amours got into fashion." It is no wonder, therefore, that

1 *Seir Mutaqherin*, iii. p. 85.

this atmosphere of luxury and moral degeneration did not fail to vitiate the general moral tone of society, especially of the upper classes. Public opinion was so low that very many forms of shameless vice, often accompanied by cruelty and violence, attracted little condemnation and received less punishment. It reminds one of the days of Charles II and his courtiers. It is needless to recapitulate details: but it may be noted that hardly any of the worthies of this period, whether Hindu or Muhammedan, could ever show, both in their public and private life, a perfectly clean record. One can easily understand from this the degenerate tone in the writings of the period, which sprang up chiefly round the courts of these rajas or zemindars, for they were the dispensers of the daily bread of the poets. Even the work of the devout Rāmprasād or of the illiterate Kabiwālās was not entirely free from this almost universal taint.

THE HUMILIATION OF THE BRAHMANS

Next to the zemindars, came the class of learned Brāhmaṇs, the other important factor of the social fabric, who suffered no less from these political and social changes. Even in this period of anarchy and oppression, the pr estly class, however fallen or cried down in modern times, was recognised as the head of society, as the spiritual guide and enlightener of the race. Whatever damaging influence their much-too-decried exclusiveness might have produced, it cannot be denied that as a class they hardly ever fell below this high expectation. The occupation of the Brāhmaṇs, although on the decline, had not yet lost its ancient lustre and dignity, and there were men among them still who were, as of yore, capable of fearless acts of self-sacrifice for the good of the community. The Brāhmaṇs were not only the educators of the nation but also its lawgivers, its judges, and at times its acknowledged heads and dictators in social matters. Although literature was not their profession, their sphere of usefulness consisted in their interest in mental and spiritual culture. But a change

of the deepest kind was coming over the spirit of this ancient and honoured class. After the political storm of the century had blown over, the Brāhmaṇs found themselves utterly neglected, nay, humiliated and ruined. They had not only lost the patronage at court and of the great landed aristocracy, who always revered their learning and piety, but they also found themselves losing, together with their ancient prestige, the free charitable gifts of landed property to which they mainly looked up for their support. A regulation was passed in 1793 for enquiry into the validity of various existing *Lākherāj* grants: and as a direct result of this, many of these presumed charitable grants were cancelled. This dealt a severe blow to the poor Brāhmaṇs who, thus shorn of their land and their glory, became more and more dependent than ever for their living on the gifts of the lower classes to whose tastes and superstitions they were now compelled to pander. The most enlightened among them, no doubt, remained isolated or retired into obscurity in moody silence; but the majority of them did everything in their power to please the mob, who were now almost their only customers. With the fall of the Brāhmaṇs, however, there was no doubt the rise of the powerful middle class; but the ruin of this hereditary intellectual class was a loss in itself. The axe was laid at the root of ancient learning and ancient culture ; the influence which produced the sublime in Hindu civilisation vanished, the influence which produced the superstitious and the ridiculous in it increased. Such was the state of knowledge and culture at the beginning of the last century that Jayanārāyaṇ Tarkapañchānan in his preface to the *Sarvadarśana Saṁgraha* had to lament that the pundits of his time never cared to read more than four books in their lifetime; and just before the foundation of Calcutta Sanskrit College, such was the ignorance of the Bengali pundits that none of them could enlighten Sir William Jones on the subject of ancient Sanskrit drama.

INHERENT CAUSES OF SOCIAL DECLINE ; THE CASTE SYSTEM

The decline of the society and the intellect of Bengal is almost synchronous with and, no doubt, was facilitated by the decay of Muhammedan rule and the prevalence of the Company's misrule. But the process, slow enough to be almost imperceptible, was, however, not due to this circumstance alone. The political and social causes no doubt hastened the decadence already afoot; but it would be hasty to attribute everything to such extraneous causes. There was something wrong in the social structure itself to account for this decadence. A little reflection will show that the Hindu society carried within itself the germs of its own decay. However beneficial the institution of caste might have been to the ancient society, of which it formed the universal and natural basis, it cannot be doubted that its exclusiveness, in course of time, gave rise to a monopoly which, like the monopoly of the mediaeval monks of Europe, proved injurious to intellectual progress beyond a certain stage. Within the small privileged hereditary class to which the spread of knowledge was confined, the arts and sciences, no doubt, were carried to a pitch of perfection, but competition, thus artificially limited, naturally gave no scope to favourable variations in intellectual development. The intellectual capacity of the individual or the class was increased at the cost of general ignorance and inferiority of the race. The system made life easy and smooth and comparatively free from that struggle and unrest which are the inexorable conditions of all progress.

This state of things, leading as it did to decadence, could not continue long, and under the influence of Muhammedanism and its doctrine of equality, a fresh impetus was given to progress by relaxing the restrictions of the caste system. From about the beginning of the 16th century, we have a succession of religious and social reformers, Rāmānanda, Kabīr, Nānak and Chaitanya, all of whom protested against

caste and preached universal brotherhood. It was this impulse which gave an early impetus to the vernacular literatures of India; for these reformers, unlike the learned Sanskritists, preached to the people in the language of the people, and their teachings were embodied in voluminous works which enriched vernacular literatures. But, although the rigour of the caste system was for a time overcome and a healthy feeling for equality was abroad, the evils of the time-honoured institution, firmly rooted through centuries in the social fabric, could not be eradicated in a day. They continued to do their work and hastened the decadence which, in spite of the attempts of these religious reformers, had become inevitable; and the anti-caste influence of the British contact and of European literature only intensified the change already set on foot by Baiṣṇaba and other movements. Although at this critical time, the East India Company in England and in India, sunk to the lowest depth of philistinism, apprehended the spread of knowledge and western ideas fatal to the British rule, yet it was fortunate that there were self-sacrificing missionaries and school masters ready for work, and a few far-sighted statesmen who, notwithstanding the narrow policy of the government at home, thought it "godlike bounty to bestow expansion of intellect." The empire in India had been, moreover, founded at a time when the tide was turning, when Europe was in the throes of a great Revolution, which, considered politically, socially and intellectually, is one of the greatest in modern history. The wave of liberalism which was to pass through Europe could not be expected to leave untouched the shores of the newly acquired empire in India.

One of the chief causes why the evils of caste system could not be eradicated in a day was the protective spirit of Hindu religion in social matters. Notwithstanding that historians of civilisation like Buckle[1] deny to religion any

1 *History of Civilisation in England*, Vol. I, Ch. v.

influence at all, Hindu religion had always governed Hindu society, and it is through the institution of caste that this influence had been remarkably felt. However much Hinduism had been marked by intellectual toleration and adaptability to its environment, its sway, in social matters at least, had always been despotic. Not only the individual but also the social life of the people had been moulded by their religion for evil or for good. The entire existence of a Hindu may be said without exaggeration to be a round of religious duties; and in social matters, hedged in by minute rules and restrictions, the various classes of the community had little room for expansion and progress beyond a certain stage. But this domination of religion over society became more and more stringent with the decay of Hindu civilisation during the later Hindu and Muhammedan periods. Hence arose some of the absurd restrictions and retrogressive customs which the efforts of a succession of religious reformers from Kabīr and Chaitanya down to Rām Mohan Rāy have not been able completely to remove. That the Hinduism of the 18th and the early 19th century had been a strange compound of the sublime and the ridiculous is thus easily intelligible.

RELIGIOUS LIFE AT THE BEGINNING OF THE 19TH CENTURY

With the fall of the Brāhmaṇs and general decadence of social and intellectual life in the country, there was also a partial decadence of the religious life and ideals of the people, imperceptibly making its headway from the Muhammedan times. It does not concern us here as to how much of this was due to decadent Buddhism or decadent Baiṣṇavism, or how far the aboriginal ethnical elements in Lower Bengal reacted upon it. The mass of superstitions had always existed, and still everywhere exists; but from this time onwards, there was a deliberate rejection of the spiritual side of the old faith and a corresponding indentification with the semi-aboriginal superstitions of the masses. Public opinion

on religious matters was low, although the religiosity of the people cannot be denied ; and the undoubted belief in the absolving efficacy of superstious rites calmed the imagination and allayed the terrors of conscience. Empty rituals, depraved practices, and even horrid ceremonies like hook-swinging, human sacrifice, and infanticide partially justify the unsparing abuse of Hindu religion by the missionaries. But what the missionaries could not preceive in their proselytizing zeal was that the religious life of the Hindu had never been quite extinct. There had been decay since the Muhammedan rule, aggravated by various complex causes, but not death; there had been an increase of feebleness, but not absolute inanition. An age which produced the *Gaṅgā-bhakti-taraṅgiṇī*, *Hari-līlā*, or the devotional songs of Rāmprasād could not indeed be said to be devoid of religious life. The devotional fervour of Śrī Chaitanya, the intellectual ideas of naiyāyika Raghunātha, the ritualistic doctrines of smārta Raghunandan and the mystic spiritualism of the tāntric Kṛṣṇānanda—the four divergent forces which have always exercised great influence on Hindu society since the 16th century—had never lost their domination even in this era of decadence. The protective spirit of Hinduism and the political and social vicissitudes consequent upon Muhammedan rule had, no doubt, been injurious to religious progress, but in spite of these impediments religion had always influenced the social, moral and intellectual progress of the nation.

CHANGE OF RELIGIOUS IDEALS IN THE 18TH AND THE EARLY 19TH CENTURY

From the earliest time down to the present day, religious struggle and religious revival have always played an important part in the history of the nation's intellectual progress. It is partly for this reason that notwithstanding four centuries of earnest preaching by Roman Catholics and two centuries of earnest preaching by Protestants, Christianity made little impression upon the Hindus, especially amongst the

upper classes. Religious life was never dead but dormant. It is true that the religious ideal has changed from time to time and moulded itself to some extent to the necessities of the age, and this will also be evident from a study of the various phases of the historic development of Hindu religion. At this stage of decadence, it could not be expected to remain in an unalloyed state. It had gone through many convulsions and alterations in the previous age, and many empty dogmas and gross superstitions had naturally gathered around it. But, however much this state of religion appeared repulsive to the prejudiced eyes of the zealous missionaries or of the enthusiastic "Young Bengal" who proud of the new light, picked up an inveterate hatred of everything old, it was still in its essence and on the doctrinal side, almost invulnerable. The reactions which have followed in favour of what may be called rationalistic Hinduism and other religious movements in the 19th century bear witness to its inward strength as well as to the inherited spirituality of the Hindu.

It is obvious that under these political, social and intellectual conditions, no literature worth the name could easily flourish. With the ruin of the zemindars and the degradation of the Brāhmaṇs, who constituted respectively the aristocracy of wealth and the aristocracy of intellect, a process of disintegration had begun in the social fabric which ended in an absolute dissolution of all social solidarity. It took nearly half a century before there was a general subsidence of these effects and a new order of things could take the place of the old. With a reconstruction of art and ideal, there was indeed the birth of a new world and a new literature ; but, generally speaking, from the middle of the 18th century to the middle of the 19th, we have only rude unshaped writings interesting to the student, but no masterpiece, acceptable to all. It was essentially a transitional stage, and there can be no doubt that these vicissitudes of the 18th century and the monotonous material and intellectual development of the first half of the 19th robbed Bengali literature

of many an imaginative writer. Calcutta had not yet settled down into a metropolis, and with the dispersal of the Muhammedan government and the Hindu zemindars, there was no fixed intellectual centre which would have brought advantages of social solidarity among those who still retained literary instincts and aspirations. Bhārat-chandra died in 1760, and in a short time occurred also the deaths of Durgā-prasād and Rām-prasād. With these last great names, we are at the end of what remained of ancient Bengali literature. During the continuance of the dual system of government between 1865 and 1872, the older poets, one by one, passed away; and none remained who could for a time step into their vacant place.

THE INTERREGNUM TILL THE EMERGENCE OF THE NEW LITERATURE WAS BROKEN CHIEFLY, IF NOT WHOLLY, BY THE KABIWĀLĀS

Between the death of Bhārat-chandra in 1760 and the first appearance of Īśvar Gupta in *Sambād-prabhākar* of 1831, there came an interregnum of more than half a century, during which there was no man who had been strong enough to seize the unclaimed sceptre. The only pretenders were the Kabiwālās, but they never rose to that level of artistic merit and sustained literary composition which would have enabled them to strike a commanding figure on the empty stage Who would think of placing Haru Ṭhākur or Rām Basu side by side with Bhārat-chandra or Rām-prasād? The Kabiwālās left behind them few things of permanent literary value; for although some of them were men of undoubted poetic power, they never cultivated literature for its own sake, but composed their songs chiefly to please their new patrons in society—the upstart zemindars, the wealthy speculators, or the illiterate mass whose chief amusement consisted of these songs, Pāñchālis, or Jātrās. The Kabi literature, therefore, was one of a very composite character ; and side by side with higher flights, we have interspersed not a little amount of flat

colloquial verbiage which no stretch of literary charity would ever call poetic in the true sense of the term. The literary ideal was not, as can be expected, very high, and its tone not always commendable ; yet one thing most remarkable about these songs, which puts them in sharp contrast to the literature which Bhārat-chandra set in fashion, was its comparative freedom from the stamp of ornateness or erudite classicality, as well as from the vitiated moral tone, which defaces the writings of many a great poet of this period. Yet in spite of these and other merits, none of the Kabiwālās had reached that standard of literary excellence which would have enabled them to emulate the more substantial writings of the older poets, although they contributed some truly beautiful pieces to the literature of Bengali songs. Fallen on evil days, their genius seems never to have received its fullest scope, and besides keeping our literature back from absolute death during the period of interregnum, their work seems to possess historically no other permanent value. They act as a link keeping up the continuity of literary history, and though by themselves affording an interesting field of study, they belong through their literary filiation and inherited artistic tradition to the age preceding our era.

EFFECT OF THE REVOLUTIONARY CHANGES WHICH THE BRITISH OCCUPATION OF BENGAL BROUGHT ABOUT

By the beginning of the 19th century, however, the old order was changing, yielding place to new. A new literature, a new spirit and a new order of society were gradually taking the place of the time-honoured institutions which had held their sway over the country for centuries. We often find in literary history that with some great revolution, political, social or religious, literature receives a fresh impetus. We need hardly recall the example of the French Revolution from which dates a period of literary activity which has culminated in the rich literary aftergrowths of modern Europe. But the popular opinion, long entertained, that the

British occupation of Bengal by itself sufficiently accounted for and directly caused the disappearance of ancient literature as distinguished from modern, is a delusion which the revived study of the literature itself would, in a great measure, help to check and correct. However great and far-reaching its effect was, the British 'conquest' no more swept away ancient Bengal and its literature and replaced it with something else than the Norman Conquest of England directly caused the disappearance of Anglo-saxon England and its literature. Modern evolutionary theory hardly leaves any room for such absolute political or literary cataclysms; and a little consideration will show that the British occupation of Bengal, like the Norman one of England, only helped and turned to good a process of decadence in literature, which had independently begun, which was going on rapidly and which, if the political revolution had not dealt a death-blow to the exhausted literature, would have landed it independently in absolute barrenness and stagnation.

In order to appreciate what effect British occupation of Bengal produced upon Bengali literature, we must realise in what state it actually had been when the new start was made. It was, as we have stated, a period of great confusion. The political and social disturbances, no doubt, as the apologist of Bengali literature often points out, were affecting men's minds, and the physical and mental fatigue consequent thereupon is responsible to a great extent for this lamented paucity of literary productions; but if we look to the literature itself we shall see that a process of inherent decay and dissolution had already begun in it, which indicated rapid decline and which, if unchecked, might have independently led to its ultimate extinction. A change of the deepest and widest kind was coming over the spirit of Bengali literature during the years when the political destiny of India was being decided in other fields; but this change, such as it was, meant no good augury to its course.

WHAT THIS PROCESS WAS AND HOW IT CAME ABOUT

In spite of occasional royal patronage, as in the cases of Bidyāpati or Kabikaṅkaṇ, the vernacular literature before the 18th century very seldom found shelter in the courts of the wealthy, and it was never, in any sense, courtly literature. From this period, however, it began to centre round the courts of the wealthy, and a new world, that of the courtier and the adventurer, was being formed. The courts of Rājā Kṛṣṇachandra of Nadīyā and of Rājā Rājballabh of Dacca were notable not only for their luxury, splendour and intrigues, but also for their patronage of arts and literature. But this court-influence, as it would be natural to expect in this age, was not an unmixed good. Poetry, which had hitherto consisted of simple tales of village-life or of devotional poems of rare beauty and fervour, had now to appeal exclusively to the upper classes of society whose taste and temper it naturally reflected. As on the one hand, it gained in refinement and splendour, so on the other, it lost its pristine simplicity, and was marked with a stamp of ornateness and erudite classicality which found favour with these courts. What had been fervid and spontaneous became fantastic and elaborate ; and with these new poets, some of whom were good scholars, intellect and fancy predominated over sentiment and passion, ingenuity took the place of feeling, and poetry lost its true account. On the one hand, around the court of Kṛṣṇachandra arose the artificial school of Bhārat-chandra whose poetry, more fanciful than delicate, more exquisite than passionate, first turned the tide in favour of ornate and artificial standards of verse-making ; on the other hand, under the patronage of the rival court of Rājā Rājballabh, flourished a more serious, though less poetical, group of writers who exhibit the same tendency to ornate diction and luxuriant style and the same weakness for frigid conceits, but whose profundity, allegorical fancy, didactic taste and consequent monotony present a striking contrast to the more voluptuous and attractive school at Nadīyā.

Both these schools, by their excesses, marked the close of the literary age. In spite of the exquisite quality of his phrase and his numbers, that exalt him to a place all his own, Bhārat-chandra was a far greater artist than a true poet. He was a sure and impeccable master of his own craft, yet we must confess here, as everywhere, a fall of the true poetic spirit, the neap of inspiration, the preference of what catches the eye to what touches the heart. Bhārat-chandra is not very often original; yet when he imitates, he does not choose the best models but only tries to improve upon the very second-rate works of later artificial Kāvya poets like Māgha and Śrīharṣa, or even worse things from a class of degenerate Muhammedan tales of dubious taste and excellence. Poetry is increasingly regarded as a means of display of elaborate conceits till at length nothing remains but artificiality and verbal jugglery. The consummate elegance of these writings is undoubted, but the poet seldom transports. Lifeless descriptions, pompous similes, learned digressions—a style which cannot be summed up otherwise than by the term 'florid'—these mark the makeshifts by which the lack of genuine poetic emotion is sought to be made up. Pathos or tragedy in the strict and rare sense these poets seldom or never touch; and the way in which they have repainted the ideal heroes of old recall to one's mind Dryden's travesty of Milton or of Shakespeare. Admitting even the pictorial effect, the musical cadence and the wonderful spell of language which are the chief redeeming features of this poetry, the taste and style are sometimes so vitiated and vulgar that it fully deserves the nemesis of neglect which is gradually falling upon it. The degenerate court-influence went a long way not only in fostering a certain feminine langour and luxuriance of style, but it was also responsible for the taint of indecency which often mars its best passages. This grossness was, no doubt, partly conventional and sprang obviously from the poetic convention established by the later artificial schools of Sanskrit Poetry; but, even admitting this, it must be said that attempts

to excuse this utter want of decency and of morals have all proved futile, and the least valid of all is that which would shield this poetry under, the mantle of the classics. The *kuṭnīs* take the place of *dutīs* of Baiṣṇaba songs; and the course of illicit love or lust, with all its intricacies of courtship, intrigue and insolence was never suffered to flaunt itself with such shameless impudence. Even Rāmprasād, in spite of his religious songs, could not escape the contagion and the exquisite songs of the Kabiwālās were not wholly free from the taint.

INHERENT DRAWBACKS IN THE OLD LITERATURE ITSELF WHICH RETARDED ITS GROWTH

These enormities in the existing schools of poetry certainly indicate the close of the literary age. Excess of folly in literature, like excess of injustice in political matters, lead up to and foretell revolutions. Besides, the course of ancient Bengali literature itself as a whole suffered from many inherent drawbacks which hampered its growth cruelly and which might by itself have led to its ultimate extinction. Of these drawbacks, monotony of subject and limitation of form were the foremost and engage the critic at once. It is true that the social and political conditions under an alien rule were never wholly favourable to the quiet development of national culture; that the contempt with which vernacular literature had been universally held always retarded its growth; that the Baiṣṇaba movement, even though it had wrested the monopoly of learning from the Brāhmaṇs as a class, was more a sectarian than a wide-spread national tendency and it only intensified the devotional ardour which had very few opportunities for complete secularisation; and that literature, at least in the vernacular, was seldom cultivated for its own sake in those days when a leisured class of literary men had not yet arisen ; yet even these circumstances do not wholly explain the absolute limitation of subject to religion in the main, and out of religion to a little legend, a little

contemporary social song, and the thinnest surplus of other matters. Glorification of gods and goddesses seems to be the ultimate object of all the poets who could not venture to publish anything except under the borrowed garb of religion. The marvellous result accomplished within this limitation show that there was surely nothing wrong with the genius of these poets but something was wrong in the literature itself, that its theme was too narrow and limited to afford the fullest scope for development and progress. One of the remarkable tendencies of later Hindu culture generally and of old vernacular literature in particular was that they carried the suppression of individuality too far ; and that the consequence has been to exalt authority and discourage originality. Of course, nothing can be more objectionable than the obtrusive self-assertiveness of modern times, yet it must be admitted that it nevertheless furthers intellectual progress by relaxing the severity of effete conventionalities and allowing ambition freer scope and wider soaring region. But this limitation of subject and this conservative taste were coupled with a further limitation of poetry in its form, its staple of stereotyped verses, beyond which it could never stray but which was apt to become dull, monotonous and sing-song, especially because of its sectional pauses. But the greatest drawback, which would of itself indicate the poverty of the literature in its certain aspects, was the complete absence of prose as a vehicle of literary expression. It is true that in all literature, as the immortal jest of Molière implies, prose always comes after poetry ; yet in ancient Bengali literature we have practically very little good prose at all, however late.[1]

1 Some account of the growth and development of old Bengali prose is given in App. I at the end of this volume.

THESE FACTS SHOW THAT THE DECADENT LITERATURE, IF IT WERE TO PROLONG ITS LIFE, NEEDED A CHANGE AND THE CHANGE WAS BROUGHT BY THE BRITISH OCCUPATION OF BENGAL

In critically examining the literary history of Bengal in the pre-British era, it is impossible to mistake the significance of these facts: namely, that its poetry, though vigorously started under the best auspices and though attaining to some measure of relative perfection, was itself failing ; and that at no period of its long history, it produced prose that could be called such. There must have been something wrong in the very system, some coldness in the literary constitution to account for this decadence and this poverty. If a literature after producing great things in the past does nothing more for centuries, if it shows signs of decadence and practically limits itself to trifles, then the conclusion is irresistible that it badly wants a change. Long before the stability of British rule was beyond all question a process of decadence or dissolution had already begun which indicated a change in its spirit. The British occupation and its accompanying evils only hastened this change, so that a new era of literary history began in Bengal with the firm establishment of British rule. It is amiable but entirely unhistorical imagination which suggests that it was the British rule which entirely swept away the old literature and replaced it with the new. There was no such absolute breach of the continuity of our literary history ; a change was inevitable and the British rule brought it about in the most novel and unexpected way, although it would be difficult to say what form it would have taken had there been no British occupation of Bengal.

THE BEGINNING OF THE 19TH CENTURY

The commencement of the 19th century saw a more settled order of things. Beginning with the patch-work of the Regulating Act of 1774, vigorous attempts were made to reform the abuses of misrule which had been bringing

disgrace to British ideas of justice and honour, and the permanence of British rule was now more or less a settled fact. The Company in the meantime had been extending its territories beyond the limits of Bengal. Hastings had boldly thrown aside the mask of dual government which Clive had thought so expedient to wear. But even Hastings, boldly ambitious of founding an Empire in India, could not carry out what he devised. The records of the period give us some glimpses of good intentions but there was little of actual performance. From Cornwallis's time however, we enter upon a brighter period. Cornwallis had greater freedom from interference or control, and his noble rank enabled him to demand his own terms from the wise-heads at Leadenhall Street. In spite of Thornton's strictures, it cannot be denied that Cornwallis realised for the first time that the governed as well as the governors ought to be considered in all system of good government. It was he who gave a better moral tone to the civil service. It is not necessary here to trace step by step this gradual process of political reconstruction from Cornwallis's time onward or enter into the details of every scheme of reform or every administrative measure. The general effect of these changes was that the Company was gradually being transformed from a trading corporation into a sovereign power. The idea that Bengal was an estate which yielded a large rental but involved none of the responsibilities of government had not, it is true, totally disappeared; but none of the administrators since this time can be regarded as mere land-steward of private property. Narrow views still prevailed but we find a liberal-minded Governor-General like Wellesley laying stress upon the fact that the Factory had grown into an Empire, and that the civil servants should not consider themselves as mere agents of a commercial concern but as responsible officers and administrators whose duty it was to understand the people. The revenue system began to be placed on a secure footing. There was greater peace and order throughout the

country, and the civil, criminal and police functions of the government were beginning to be organised.

CALCUTTA SETTLING DOWN INTO A METROPOLIS

The rural administration was taken in hand and Calcutta was forming itself into a metropolis. In 1771 we find Calcutta a straggling village of mud-houses, the whole of the ground south of Chandpal Ghat thickly covered with jungle and forest-trees. From 1780 onwards, we read in the Calcutta papers of frequent complaints about the indescribably filthy condition of the streets and roads which is fully confirmed by the account of Grandpré in 1790, who tells us of the canals and cesspools reeking with putrefying animal matter—the awful stench coming out of them—the myriads of flies and flocks of animals and birds acting as scavenger.[1] In the times of Hastings and Francis and for a long period after that, dacoity and highway robbery within a mile of the seat of government and of the Supreme Court were, we have seen, crimes exceedingly prevalent. But when Hastings' government abolished the provincial Revenue Councils and transferred from Murshidabad to Calcutta the seat of the Supreme Courts of Justice as well as the head-seat of revenue administration and the Khalsa, Calcutta was being deliberately designed to become ultimately the political capital of Bengal.[2]

1 This state of things continued for a long time, and we hear of constant complaints of this not only in the English papers and also in the *Samāchār-darpaṇ* as late 1818. See *Samāchār-darpaṇ*, Nov. 14, 1818 ; May 27, 1820 etc. (the quotations, will be found given in my article on the above-mentioned paper in *Sāhitya Pariṣat Patrikā* vol. 24, no. 3, p. 163.)

2 Gleig, *Memoirs of Warren Hastings*, vol. i. p. 263.

INTELLECTUAL AND SOCIAL CENTRES SPRINGING UP ALONG THE BANKS OF THE GANGES CLOSE TO CALCUTTA

By 1800, a busy and flourishing town was being built up;[1] and attracted by its commercial importance, to which, notwithstanding the monopoly of the Company and its discouragement of private enterprise, Stavorinus, writing so far back as 1770, bears strong testimony, many Bengali families as well as men of other nationalities began to settle down. From the time of the inroads of the Mahrattas, people had fled from the interior and settled down on the banks of the Ganges, close to Calcutta, where in course of time, there arose several flourishing towns while the rest of Bengal lay under disorder and misrule. Bengal in the times past had many capitals and many centres of learning, and all these now converged to the few spots along the Ganges-bank and chiefly to the metropolis. It is natural to expect that here, with Calcutta as its centre, began the earliest efforts to diffuse knowledge, reform abuses, formulate new ideas, and build up a new order of society and literature. From this arises the importance of the metropolis in later Bengali literature—an importance which will be more fully realised when we consider that refined urbanity is one of the main characteristics which differentiates the modern literature from its pre-British predecessor. If the ancient literature, as one of its historians says, was a gift of the lower to the higher classes and was fostered chiefly in the remote and secluded village-homes, the modern literature is mostly the work of the educated man of the city, and a gift from him spreading down to the lowest classes. In studying modern literature,

1 On the history and topography of old Calcutta, literature is scattered and plentiful. One may however consult with advantage A. K. Roy, *A Short History of Calcutta* (included in Census Reports, viii, pt. I, 1901) ; Rainey, *Topographical and Historical Sketch of Calcutta*, 1876; Busteed, *Echoes from Old Calcutta* 1888; Cotton, *Calcutta Old and New* (Calcutta 1907) ; articles in *Bengal Past and Present* and references given therein ; Long, *Calcutta in Olden times* (*Cal. Rev.* 1850 and 1860).

we must steadily keep our eyes fixed upon these centres of influences, of which Calcutta and Śrīrāmpur, as we shall see, become all-important in the first stage of our history.

GROWTH OF CALCUTTA AND ITS AWAKENING TO NEW INFLUENCES

In these crowded cities, which had drawn into it the flower of Bengali families from all parts of the country and which afforded endles opportunities of intercourse between the European and the Bengali communities, a new era was beginning in the social and literary history of the people. Happily for the country, the hour of awakening to new thoughts had dawned. On the 10th October, 1800, we find the missionaries at Śrīrāmpur thus writing home: "There appears to be a favourable change in the general temper of the people. Commerce has roused new thoughts and awakened new energies, so that hundreds, if we could skilfully teach them, would crowd to learn the English language."[1] Hitherto education had been totally neglected. The history of English education in Bengal has a very important bearing on the history of the intellectual progress and will be sketched in its proper place ; it would be enough to indicate here that during the early days of the Company's rule, the promotion of education, neither here nor in England, was regarded as a duty of government ; on the contrary, the safety of the Indian Empire was thought to depend upon keeping the people immersed in ignorance. It was not until Wellesley's time that more liberal ideas began to gain ground. Thus the history of education in this early period, as we shall see, consisted chiefly of the educational efforts of private individuals who had set up schools for instruction in the rudiments of learning. Such small isolated attempts are obviously by their very nature bound to be transitory ; and such private schools could not surely be

1 Smith, *Life of William Carey* (New reprint, 1912), p. 274 ; Eustace Carey, *Memoirs of William Carey*, pp. 406-7.

expected to answer the larger purpose of national education. Such humble efforts date so far back as 1747 ;[1] but the desire of prospering in commercial enterprise under the new condition of things served as a great incentive to English education, as Persian education, now declining, had been eagerly sought for under the Muhammedan administration. In 1796, only a few Bengali children were taught by European school-masters: but gradually a set of Bengali teachers possessing a smattering of English came into existence and opened schools. In those days, however, penmanship, quickness in calculations and a knowledge of accounts were considered greater accomplishments than an accurate study of English itself ; and even men like Rām-dulāl De, we are told, never cared to make a better acquaintance with English than picking up a few broken phrases of colloquial speech ; for such knowledge was enough to make them serve as ship-sarkārs, banians and writers, and ultimately win for them colossal fortunes.

STATE OF BENGALI EDUCATION

The state of Bengali education, if not in a worse, was at least in no better plight. The mass of Bengali manuscripts recently unearthed by patient investigations of modern scholars was mostly unknown, and the literature of the time, possessing hardly any printed books, consisted chiefly of a handful of works, such as Manasā, Dharmamaṅgal, Mahābhārat of Kāśīdās, Rāmāyaṇ of Kṛttibās, Chaṇḍī of Kabikaṅkaṇ, Annadāmaṅgal of Bhārat-chandra, and probably the songs of Rām-prasād. The only works which were read in the Pāṭh-śālās, we learn on the authority of the biographer of Rām-kamal Sen,[2] were Guru-dakṣiṇā and the rules of arithmetic by Śubhaṅkar. There were neither good schools nor were there proper elementary text-books for purposes

1 Long, *Hand-Book to Bengal Missions*, London 1848, pp. 441-451. But see *Good Old Days*, vol. i, p. 893 et seq. and below pt. ii, ch. i.

2 Pearychand Mitra, *Life of Ramkomul Sen* (1880), p. 7.

of instruction ; and even a decade later, this was one of the initial difficulties which the School Society felt in carrying out its worthy object of Bengali education. Such was the state of Bengali learning at this time that we learn from a writer in the *Friend of India*[1] "If they can *write* at all, each character, to say nothing of orthography, is made in so irregular and indistinct a manner, that comparatively few of them could read what is written by another ; and some of them can scarcely wade through what has been written by themselves, after any lapse of time. If they have learnt to *read*, they can seldom read five words together, without stopping to make out the syllables, and often scarcely two, even when the writing is legible. The case is precisely the same with the knowledge of *figures*." These observations, however, coming, as they do, perhaps from a missionary, whose personal knowledge of the country and its inhabitants might not perhaps have extended beyond narrow limits, must be taken subject to some reservation. Although this might be the picture of the general state of knowledge and culture at this time, yet there still lived in dignified isolation a few learned Pandits in the remote villages, and that the days of Sanskrit learning were not quite over. But even these Brāhmaṇs, with a few exceptions, were now, as we have stated, a fallen race; and the exclusive genius of Brāhmaṇism in its lowest phase not only barred the masses from the temple of knowledge but also made themselves neglect the vernacular as "Prakrit" dialect fit only for "demons and women". So far indeed had they carried their contempt for their mother-tongue that while they cultivated the learned language with assiduity they, in many instances, prided themselves on writing the language

1 Vol. ii, p. 392, quoted in *Cal. Rev.* vol. xiii, 1850. p. 132. See also *Quarterly Friend of India*, vol. iv. p. 152. This remark is confirmed by what Forster says in the Introduction to his *Vocabulary* with regard to the uncertainty of Bengali spelling and Bengali script.

of the people with inaccuracy and sometimes in an almost unintelligible semi-barbaric sanskritised style. We shall see some specimens of the latter kind even in the writings of the more accomplished Pandits of the Fort William College. It is natural to expect that these so-called Pandits should strenuously discourage the use of the vernacular among the people and set their face against its improvement. The neglect of the vernaculars, especially Bengali, had reached such a stage that when Dr. Carey began to lecture at Fort William Collage, he could hardly muster a class; and the same learned doctor when he visited Nadīyā, not many years ago the illustrious centre of Bengali language and literature, "he could not discover more than 40 separate works, all in manuscripts, as the whole literature of 30,000,000 of people up to that time[1]."

IMPROVEMENT COMES FROM WITHOUT

The state of learning in Bengal may not be unfitly compared to that in England after the ravages of the Danes, of which King Alfred said "there was a time when people came to this island for instruction, now we must get it from abroad, if we want it". For, under this state of things, it is obvious that no impetus coming from within, if improvement is to be effected, it must come from outside. When we picture to ourselves adventurers, ne'er-do-wells, plain townsfolk and country-folk, peaceful home-stayers in the remote villages and commercial banians in the crowded cities, and later on, well-to-do English gentlemen pushing their way up the river, laying out broad plantations and sultanising over the whole neighbourhood, we can hardly expect any manifestation of the literary genius in such an environment. With the mental and physical absorption incident upon social and political disorders in the country, with no metropolis to furnish the needed contact of mind with mind, with repressive material needs

1 Smith, *op. cit.*, p. 202.

causing large drain upon one's physical energy, and above all, with the decay of artistic impulses and literary traditions, it is no wonder that the nation produced little literature and developed little culture of importance. The impulse at length came from outside. We cannot but acknowledge with feelings of mingled shame and gratefulness that the first and earliest efforts at ameleorating our condition were made by a handful of philanthropic Europeans, both civilians and missionaries, who in their liberal views moved far ahead of their age.

RELATION BETWEEN THE EUROPEAN AND THE BENGALI COMMUNITY IN THOSE DAYS

In spite of the Cornwallis Code and the public policy of exclusion, the ruler and the ruled had begun to live in greater amity and fellow-feeling. With the assumption of the responsibilities of political government, the ruling classes began to take greater interest in the lives of the people committed to their care. In vain do we seek in modern Bengal philanthropists of the type of Colvin, Palmer, Carey, Marshman and David Hare, whose memory was gratefully cherished by the Bengali-speaking race[1]. No doubt, the Company's servants hitherto had never regarded India as their home but they had been always sojourners in a far country whose only ambition was to obtain riches as soon as possible and return home as gentlemen of leisure. This was one of the underlying causes of the constant disputes between the Company and its self-seeking agents ; and it is no wonder that throughout the 18th century constant complaints of corruption, peculation and general dishonesty of the agents are to be found in the Letter-Books of the Company. But with stability of British rule, when commercialism was declining as a dominating factor in the Company's policy, and with the realisation of greater administrative responsibility, this order of things was

1 The couplet goes thus (quoted in Rajnarayan Basu's *Ekāl O Sekāl*) ; হেয়ার কল্বিন্ পামরশ্চ কেরী মার্শমনস্তথা। পঞ্চ গোরাঃ স্মরেন্নিত্যং মহাপাতকনাশনং॥

gradually changing. Two obvious reasons naturally strengthened the ties which bound these foreignersto this country. The first is that in those days of weary and perilous voyage round the Cape, men who came out to India and had a taste for the easy-going (sometimes reckless) life of pleasure and profit in the tropics, had no mind to return home very soon ; while in the next place, the number of Europeans who lived here was very small and they consisted mostly of officials, for not only was the climate unsuitable to Europeans generally[1] but the policy of government also regarded introduction of free trade and Europeans to be dangerous to the safety of the newly acquired empire. But whatever might be the reason, there is no gainsaying the fact that most of these Europeans, who had lived here for a long time, had a genuine affection for the country, and some of them went so far as to adopt the manners and customs and even the dress of the Bengali population. Enjoying the *hooka,* whose "long ornamental snake coiled round and round the rails of the chair" was one of the customs, among others, immortalised by Thackeray, which was long fashionable[2] with these official and non-official 'Nabobs'; and it would surprise many a modern reader to learn that it even fascinated the ladies, on whose part "it was considered a high compliment to show a preference for a gentleman by tasting his *hooka.*"

1 Cf. Sir Philip Francis's impressions of his residence in this country. Macaulay, writing after 60 years with the experience of a much improved country, speaks almost in the same strain in his characteristically sweeping way.

2 A picture of this custom and manner of life is preserved for us in the pages of the immortal *Ālāler Gharer Dulāl.* We read in Carey's *Dialogues* (3rd Ed. 1818, p. 3) that one of the indispensably necessary servant of the Englishman's household was a hookabardar or a man to prepare his *hooka.* Stavorinus (vol. i, 345) also relates how on the occasion of his visit to Governor Cartier at Calcutta, he was treated with the *hooka* at an orientally sumptuous banquet given in his honour. See also Busteed, *op. cit.* p. 157 ; *Good Old Days,* vol. i. 63.

STUDY OF BENGALI BY EUROPEAN SETTLERS

Besides this affection of the early European settlers for their land of adoption, which prompted them to express themselves occasionally in its language, there were other purely political and utilitarian grounds which induced them to the study and encouragement of the vernacular. Time was coming when Bengali should, both officially as well as popularly, be the recognised vernacular; and both Halhed and Forster, the two earliest important European writers in Bengali, rightly insist at some length upon the absurdity and inconvenience of continuing Persian as the language of the Court and the market-place, and advocate more wide-spread and general use of Bengali in its place. Exigencies of administration which had made it almost obligatory for the governors to learn the language of the governed hastened this movement towards the neglected vernacular. The missionaries, on the other hand, found out early that if they were to reach the people directly they must first learn their language and gain a thorough knowledge of their modes of thinking and feeling. Systematic mission-work always presupposed a thorough training in their language. All these and other reasons first impelled the early European settlers to take to a systematic study of the neglected vernacular. When therefore with the disappearance of the old Bengali writers, Bengali literature had been sent adrift to shift for itself as best as it could, it was taken up and fostered by strangers hailing from distant lands whom fortunately political, personal or utilitarian reasons, if not always the love of the language or the literature itself, first urged to its elaborate study under entirely new conditions.

CONCLUDING REMARKS ON THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE GENERAL HISTORY OF THE TIME TO ITS LITERARY HISTORY

This brief and necessarily incomplete picture of the general state of this country from 1760 to 1800 will, to some extent,

exhibit the new conditions under which modern Bengali literature first came into being. The instability and perturbation, consequent upon these political changes, as well as the almost entire disintegration of social solidarity, will no doubt explain the external circumstances which retarded the growth of literature; but the literature itself since the days of Bhāratchandra had been showing inherent signs of exhaustion and decay, which was only hastened, instead of being checked, by political and social revolutions. The necessarily slow and laborious process of reconstruction which followed upon these vicissitudes absorbed men's mind for more than half a century from 1800. This will explain not only why we do not come across any great and important writer before we reach the age of Michael or Bañkim, but it will also exhibit very clearly how literary movements in Bengal had perforce been closely bound up with political, social, religious and other movements in the first half of the 19th century. Every great writer of this period of transition was of necessity a politician, a social reformer, or a religious enthusiast. We need hardly cite, for illustration, the long list of such important names as those of Rāmmohan Rāy, Kṛṣṇamohan Bandyopādhyay, Akṣay Datta, Debendranāth Ṭhākur, Īśvarchandra Bidyāsāgar, Ṭek-chānd, or Rājendralal Mitra. Even in the next generation Bañkimchandra could not keep himself entirely free from this universal tendency. Politics, social reform, and religious revival went hand in hand with literary creation. From 1825 to 1858 we shall have to extend our vision and include in our consideration various aspects of national history other than the one which is merely literary. To treat Bengali Literature in the 19th century as a series of isolated phenomenon is to give a wrong historical perspective; for here, as everywhere, literary thought and contemporary events are two inseparable aspects of national history. It is true that during the period between 1800 and 1825, these tendencies did not come into such bold relief as in the period immediately following upon it, yet for the under-

standing of the general drift, the historian of literature must from the beginning keep in view the relation of literature to the political and social history of the time; and this, apart from all reference to the theory of the insensible moulding of the literary mind and art by the considerations of race, time or circumstance, will sufficiently make clear the necessity of devoting tedious pages to a general description of the state of this country at the outset of our literary history.

ABSENCE OF LITERARY VENTURES IN THE FIRST PERIOD OF OUR HISTORY HOW TO BE EXPLAINED

The immediate effect of the political and social vicissitudes of the second half of the eighteenth century was depreciating in the extreme. The old Bengali literature, which had been subsiding gradually into decrepitude and decay, practically disappeared. The Kabiwālās, the few isolated writers in the old style, the authors of *Pāñchāli* and the host of inferior imitators of Bhāratchandra had, no doubt, kept up the continuity of literary history and maintained, even with declining powers, the ancient trend of thought and feeling. But it was an age not conspicuous for the appreciation of high ideas nor for any great enthusiasm for literary ventures. The decadence, inspite of these belated efforts of an inferior, if not an insignificant, band of writers, was rapidly hastened; and the necessity of an external stimulus, which alone could have given a new lease of life to the declining literature, was urgently felt. Such an external stimulus was not forthcoming until sometime had elapsed and tranquillity had been attained, until the rich and copious literature of the West, which under the peculiar circumstances was alone capable of furnishing the needed impetus, had been made accessible to the literary men of Bengal. In the meantime, the alien rulers of Bengal, brought up in the habits of unchecked power and in the ignorance and passion of an adventurous life, cared little for culture or literature.

The general people of the country, among whom literary traditions and aspirations had been all but extinct or had not found scope for free play, were apathetic to literary culture and devoted their attention, in this troublesome time, to the more urgent and engrossing material necessities of life. The first step, therefore, that had to be taken, before literary venture could be possible, was towards diffusion of knowledge, spread of education and promotion of literary tendencies. The first half of the 19th century, therefore, was entirely taken up in the realisation of these objects. It was necessary to prepare text-books, to translate standard works from foreign languages, to reprint older classics from inaccessible manuscripts, and in this way generally to furnish a leaven for elevating the decaying intellectual life of the country. This was the work chiefly of the foreign writers in Bengali and their colleagues, the Pandits of the Fort William College, who were pioneers in various departments of vernacular writing and who wrote, not with any personal literary ambition but with the more modest yet useful object of promoting general education. To their efforts, therefore, we chiefly owe, in a very practical sense, if not the regeneration of our literature, at least the regeneration of intellectual activities in the country.

IMPETUS GIVEN TO THE SPREAD OF EDUCATION AND GENERAL CULTURE

It is not in the least degree correct to say, as it has been often enthusiastically said, that it is the missionary, especially William Carey, who created modern Bengali Literature. The creation of modern literary Bengali covers a period of more than half a century from Carey's time, and literary style, in the strict sense of the term, was not attained until a generation later when a band of youthful Bengali writers had come into the field, equipped in all the wealth of the new knowledge. It is true, indeed, that the missionaries gave an impetus to vernacular writing when it was generally neglected. But

at the same time it must be borne in mind that we cannot fasten the parentage of modern Bengali upon the missionaries only, much less upon Carey alone, and that literature was never the sole object of the European writers but education or evangelisation. If their work fostered literature, it was not due to any definite intention on their part to do so, but it was an incidental result of what they had done for the revival of education in Bengal. A national literature, whether ancient or modern, is the outcome of a long process of development; and even Carey himself had realised very early that, in spite of the efforts of the foreigners, the best way of building up such a literature would be inducing the children of the soil themselves to take to earnest literary work. The missionary, even if he is a talented man like Carey, did hardly produce anything strictly deserving the name of literature. The importance of the missionary-work in Bengali does not lie in this ; the literature of to-day is work not of Carey, Halhed, or Forster but of the people of the soil, of Mṛtyuñjay, of Rāmmohan, of Baṅkimchandra, of Michael Madhusūdan. The missionaries, however, did great work in the first quarter of the nineteenth century in supplying the needed impetus to education by founding schools, writing elementary school-books, and diffusing knowledge through the medium of Bengali—all of which, however, had a more wide and far-reaching effect than what they were actually intended to produce.

FOREIGN INTRUSION UNDER THE CIRCUMSTANCES UNAVOIDABLE ; ITS GOOD EFFECTS

We may resent this foreign intrusion at the outset of our history but under the circumstances and in the environment such as they were, it could not have been otherwise. No doubt, the hour had come for such a regeneration and reconstruction. Had there been no foreign workers in the field, the work, however delayed, would not certainly have

remained in abeyance. But the missionaries were the first to take up the work in right earnest, and, in this respect, the importance of these early half-forgotten foreign writers can never be exaggerated. Of course, as in all early periods of literary history, the work done here chiefly consisted of translation and adaptation; yet it must be admitted that there is hardly any department of useful knowledge which these European writers did not touch. It is true that they could not adorn whatever they touched; but when we consider the large number of workers in the field—Carey, Marshman, Ward, Haughton, Yates, Morton, Pearson, Mack, Pearce, Miller, Harley, May, Stewart, to mention at random a few of the more well-known—their earnest philanthropic zeal, their unflagging diligence, the extraordinary variety, extent and influence of their writings, we cannot surely speak lightly of these pioneer writers.

CONTACT WITH THE WEST AND INFLUENCE OF WESTERN IDEAS ON MODERN LITERATURE

It is easier to disclaim foreign influence and talk of independence than actually to attain it. The literary history of Bengal in the 19th century is really the history of the influence of European ideas on Bengali thought. We can indeed dismiss, without much serious loss, the early European writers, who had certainly their own ulterior objects in their assiduous study of the vernacular and whose writings, considered as literature, possess little or no intrinsic merit. But we cannot dismiss so easily those immaterial immigrants, known as influences, which came in with the first European settler in the land and brought on by degrees a conflict and a revolution in our ideas and modes of life. When necessity had brought the East and the West side by side, it would be idle to quote Kipling's famous dictum of the unchanging East or assert ourselves independent of all contact or influence of western ideas. The pioneer efforts of the missionary and the schoolmaster for diffusing knowledge and culture through

the medium of Bengali had surely a more wide-reaching effect than that of giving temporary impetus to dormant intellectual or literary activities; for the literature which had been brought into being through the influence of western ideas was only one effect of a vaster revolution in thought, manners and religion which had taken place in this country through its contact with the West. It is out of this conflict of the eastern with the western ideals that our modern literature has grown; and the rude early efforts of the missionary and the schoolmaster, by propagating western ideas, had paved the way for this peculiar development of culture and literature in Bengal. It is with the missionary and the schoolmaster, therefore, that we must begin our study of the history of this national progress as reflected through the vernacular literature. It is they who have laid the foundations upon which the vast fabric of present-day literature is based, and every historical survey must equally embrace and define the place of the pioneer who did the spade-work as well as that of the mature littérateur who wins the laurel-wreath of later glories.

CHAPTER III

EARLIEST EUROPEAN WRITERS

It is not before the firm establishment of British rule in Bengal, in the beginning of the 19th century, that the early European settlers came in touch with Bengali language and literature. Before this, there is no trace of systematic effort in this direction, although several works have been discovered which belong to a period earlier than 1800. Of these works, it is not easy, however, to determine with certainty what Anglo-Bengali writing can claim the distinction of being the first publication by a European writer. Grierson in two papers in the *Journal* and *Proceedings* of the Asiatic Society of Bengal,[1] holds that the so-called Bengali rendering of the Lord's Prayer in Chamberlayne's *Sylloge*, published in 1715, is perhaps the earliest extant attempt at Bengali composition by a European writer. This *Sylloge* is a collection of translations of the Lord's Prayer into various languages, prepared by John Chamberlayne and David Wilkins. This work actually contains a plate purporting to represent a translation in Bengali which is headed "Bengalica". But it has been shown that this unintelligible jargon is not Bengali at all; and Wilkins himself confesses in the preface to that work that he had been unable to obtain a Bengali rendering (which language he thought to be all but extinct!) but that he had written a Malay version in the so-called Bengali character. Grierson also mentions[1] that in the *Orientalisch-und-occidentalischer Sprachmeister* compiled by Johann Friedrich Fritz (Leipzig 1748), the Bengali alphabet given as a specimen

1 *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal*, vol. xlii, 1893, p. 42ff. and *Proceedings* of the same Society, 1895, p. 89. The plate is given in the *Proceedings*. See also Grierson, *Linguistic Survey*, vol. v, pt. i, p. 23. The characters are hardly Bengali.

1 Grierson, *Linguistic Survey*, loc. cit.

is said to have been taken from the *Aurenck Szeb*, apparently a life of a Aurangzeb, by Georg Jacob Kehr. But of this latter book no trace remains.

THE PORTUGUESE IN BENGAL

Leaving aside these isolated and tentative efforts, real attempt at sustained Bengali composition did not begin till the time when the Portuguese, before the English, had begun to establish themselves in Bengal. The Portuguese, by 1530, had settled in many parts of this country and carried on an extensive trade in the chief sea-ports. The number of people claiming themselves to be of Portuguese descent was in the 17th century very large, and Portuguese language had established itself as the *lingua franca* of the country[1]. Among these Portuguese adventurers and pirates, however, we can never expect any serious attempt at literary composition; but the Portuguese missionaries seem to have done some work in this direction. Bernier[2], about 1660, speaks of "Portugal fathers and missionaries" in Bengal and says that in Bengal there are to be found not less than eight or nine thousand families of "Franguis, Portugals". Indeed there is enough evidence to show that Roman Catholic Mission, some of Portuguese origin, had at this time its centre in many parts of Bengal and that it had extended its activity from Balasore and Hugli to Chittagong and Dacca[3]. From the records left by these missionaries, it seems that these Catholic missionaries, like their Protestant or Dissenting successors in the next century, did not neglect to mix with the people of Bengal and learn their language. In 1683, Father Marcos Antonio Satucci S. J.,

1 The Portuguese language has bequeathed a large number of expressions to the vernacular tongue.

2 *Travels*, p. 27.

3 Father Hosten S. J. of the St. Xavier's College, Calcutta, gave an interesting accounts of these missions and missionaries in the *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal* (Feb. 1911) and *Bengal Past and Present*, ix, pt. 1.

the Superior of the Mission among these Bengali converts between 1679 and 1684, writes thus: "The fathers have not failed in their duty; they have learned the language well, have composed vocabularies, a grammar, a confessionary and prayers; they have translated the Christian doctrine etc., nothing of which existed till now[1]." Hosten mentions another early allusion to translationed work undertaken in Bengal in a letter of Francisco Fernandez, dated Siripur, a town of "Bengalla[2]" January 17, 1599, where it is stated that Fernandez composed a small treatise explaining summarily the points of Christian religion and a small catechism in the form of a dialogue. Father Dominic De Souza translated both these works into the "Bengalla" tongue[3]. In *Lettres Edifiantes et Curieuses*[4], Father Barbier, as early as 1723, mentions that he prepared a little catechism in Bengali. From these and other references, it is not hazardous to conclude that these Portuguese missionaries, like Carey and Marshman of a later age, though on a modest scale, must have created and left behind them an interesting body of Portuguese-Bengali literature. Of this Portuguese-Bengali literature,

1 *O Chronista de Tissuary*, Goa, vol. ii, 1867, p. 12, quoted by Hosten in *Bengal Past and Present*, vol. ix, pt. 1. This Church at Śrīpur still exists. It was twice burnt down and rebuilt. Its records are said to have all perished in fire.

2 Siripur, we learn from an article (*Portuguese in India*) in *Cal. Rev.* vol. v., 1846, is situated 18 miles south of Sonergang in Dacca and was in the 16th century an extensive Portuguese settlement. It is modern Śrīpur. See Jatindramohan Ray, *Dhākār Itihās* vol. i. p. 839.

3 *Bengal Past and Present*, July to December, 1910, p. 220, quoting *Extrait de Lettres du P. Nicolas Pimenta*......Anvers, Trognese, 1601. Nicholas Pimenta was a Jesuit missionary of Goa (Visiteur de la Compagnie de Jesus en l'Inde l'an 1598). He sent these two missionaries, Francisco Fernandez and Dominic (or Dominique) de Souza, to Bengal, from whose letters to Pimenta we get some account of contemporary Bengal and the Portuguese Missions at Siripur and elsewhere.

4 Lettre de Père Barbier, Missionaire de la Compagnie de Jesus, La Mission de Carnate, January 15, 1723, in *Lettres Edifiantes et Curieuses*, Nouvelle Ed. Mémoires de Indes, tome xiii, 1781, p. 278.

little trace remains. Of the few extant writings of a distinctly Portuguese origin, three works, all purported to be written or edited by Manoel da Assumpçao, Rector of Missio de Santa Nicolao de Tolentino, deserve mention.

PORTUGUESE CHURCH AT DACCA

All these works are supposed to have been written at Nagori, Bhawal, near Dacca. It has already been mentioned that the Portuguese missionaries had a centre at Dacca, where the existence of a church has been mentioned by Père Barbier in the *Lettres Edifiantes*. Tavernier, about 1620, states that Dacca has a "church of the Augustinians, a very stately pile ;"[1] and Hosten, in his papers on Roman Catholic Missions and Missionaries, gives interesting accounts, from original records, of this Missio de S. Nicolao Tolentino, near Bhawal, Dacca[2].

MANOEL DA ASSUMPACAO

Manoel da Assumpçao, a native of Evora and an Augustinian friar of the Congregaçao da India Oriental, was the Rector of this Mission. Of his life and labours, nothing definite is known; but he seems to have been a zealous missionary and composed two books and edited one in Bengali with the object of affording facilities to the missionaries in their Bengali discussions with the "Bramenes and Gentoos."[3]

CREPAR XAXTRER ORTHBHED OR CATHECISMO DA DOUTRINA CHRISTAÃ

Of these three works, his earliest composition seems to have been what Father Thirso Lopes, in his note to Hosten's

1 Tavernier's *Travels*, ed. V. Ball, London 1889, vol. i., p. 128.

2 References given *ante*. The other centre of these Augustinian missionaries in Bengal was the Convent of N. Senhora do Rosario of Ugalim (Hugli) in Bengalla.

3 Father Hosten states (*Bengal Past and Present*, vol. ix, pt. i, p. 42) that he has been informed that MSS of these works are now in the Public Library of Evora.

paper,[1] calls an Abridgment of the Mysteries of Faith (Compendio dos misterios da fee, ordenado em lingua Bengalla pelo P. Fr. Manoel da Assumpçaõ). A little worm-eaten and partly mutilated copy of this work[2] exists in the Library of the Asiatic Society of Bengal. The running title is: *Crepar Xaxtrer Orth, bhed* or *Cathecismo da Doutrina Christaã.* The copy in the Asiatic Society is wanting in the title-page; but an interesting certificate of publication in Portuguese is inserted at the beginning from which we learn that it was completed on August 28, 1734. It is dated from a place named Ba( )l,[3] which appears to be Bhawal from a reference at page 2 of the book itself, where Nagori also is mentioned. It might have been, as Father Lopes suggests on the authority of Barbosa Machado,[4] printed at Lisbon by Francisco da Silva (Sylva) in 1743: but unfortunately the loss of the title-page deprives us of the most certain means of corroborating this suggestion.[5] The book is composed in both Portuguese and Bengali, the former version appearing

1 Quoted in note (3), p. 60 above.

2 An account of this work on the basis of this copy by the present writer will be found in *Baṅgīya Sāhitya Pariṣat Patrikā* B.S. 1323 (vol. 23, p 179), which see for detailed information.

3 The Preface, as we have it now, is in places worm-eaten. This is what can be deciphered:

Certifico en Fr. Manoel da / Assumpçao, Reitor da Mis(si)o / de S. Nicolao Tolentino e/ (ac) tor deste compendio; (e) star o( ) / compendio tresladado ao pe (da) / letra assim o Bengalla como o/ (Po)rtuguez: e certifico mais ser es( )/Doutrina que os naturaes mais/ tendem, e entre todas a mais/ (pu)rificada de erros, em fé de que/ esta Certidaö, e se necessario/a juro *In Verbo Sacerdotis* Ba/(va)l. aos / 28 de Agosto de 1734. Fr. Manoel da Assumpçao.

4 *Bibliotheca Lusitana Historica Critica e Chronologica*, t. iii, p. 183. col. ii.

5 Burnell (*A Tentative List of Portuguese Books and Manuscripts* 1880) also gives 1743 and Lisbon as the date and place of publication (s. v. Manoel da Assumpçao), his authorities being Barbosa-Machado and Ossinger (*Bibliotheca Augustiniana*, p. 84). Ossinger gives the title as: Cathecismus doctrinae Christianae per modum dialogi.

on the rectos and the latter on the versos of the pages. The whole is in Roman character (Bengali characters having been non-existent), the words being transliterated according to the rules of Portuguese pronunciation. This method of transliteration is not only curious but also noteworthy, being one of the earliest of its kind and having much value in the study of the phonetics of the Bengali language as it existed two centuries ago.[1]

CONTENTS AND DIVISION OF THE WORK

The book attempts at an exhaustive explanation of the whole Christian doctrine in the form of a dialogue between a *Guru* and *Xixio* (Śiṣya)[2] or Preceptor and Disciple, based on the slight conceit of an imaginary travel to Bhawal. There are interspersed throughout short stories to illustrate moral principles. The contents of the work will be apparent from the following account of the division of the work and head-note of each chapter. The whole is divided into two books, entitled Puthi I and II.

Puthi I. (pp. 2-313). Xo (col...)oner ortho, ebong Prothoqhie prothoqhie buzhan (স…অনের অর্থ এবং প্রথখ্যে প্রথখ্যে বুঝান).

Tazel I. (pp. 2-18). Xidhi cruxer orthobhed (সিদ্ধি ক্রুসের অর্থভেদ). (Sign of the Cross).

II. (pp. 19-32 *sq*). Pitar Paron ebong tahan ortho (পিতার পড়ন এবং তাহান্ অর্থ). (Our Father and explanation thereof).

III. (pp. ? *ante* 49-76). This part is wanting in several pages: not known at what page it begins and what its title is. The subject seems to be Hail Mary and Rosary.

1 Suniti Kumar Chatterji read a paper on this point at a meeting of the Baṅgīya Sāhitya Pariṣat, Sept. 24, 1916, which is published in the *Patrikā* of the same Society (1322, vol. 23, p. 197). For detailed account of this work, see Sajanikanta Das, *Bāṅgālā Gadyer Pratham Yug*, B.S. 1353, pp. 16-18.

2 Xixio Gurur Bichar.

IV. (pp. 77-136). Mani xottio Niranzan (মানি সত্য নিরঞ্জন), Axthar choudo bhed ebong tahandiguer ortho. (আস্থার চৌদ্দ ভেদ এবং তাহান্‌দিগের অর্থ). (The Creed and Articles of Faith and Explanation thereof).

V. (pp. 137-244). Dos Agguia, ebong tahandiguer ortho (দশ আজ্ঞা এবং তাহান্‌দিগের অর্থ). (Ten Commandments and explanation thereof).

VI. (pp. 245-272). Pans Agguia, ebong tahandiguer ortho (পাঁচ আজ্ঞা এবং তাহান্‌দিগের অর্থ). (Five Commandments of the Church and Explanation thereof).

VII. (pp. 273-313). Xat Sacramentos, ebong tahandiguer ortho (সাত সাক্রামেণ্টোস্‌ এবং তাহান্‌দিগের অর্থ). (Seven Sacraments and Explanation thereof).

Puthi II. (pp. 314-380). Poron xaxtro xocol, ar ze uchit zanite xorgue zaibar (পড়ন শাস্ত্র সকল, আর যে উচিত জানিতে স্বর্গে যাইবার). (Explanation of the whole doctrine and what a Christian must know).

Tazel I. (pp. 314-356). Axthar bhed bichar xotto coria xiqhibar xiqhaibar upae tariber (আস্থার ভেদ বিচার, সত্য করিয়া শিখিবার শিখাইবার উপায় তরিবার). (Mysteries of the Faith).

II. (pp. 356-380). Poron Xaxtro nirala (পড়ন শাস্ত্র নিরালা). (Prayers of the doctrine).[1]

There are two songs in Puthi II: one at p. 348 headed "Cantiga sobre os mysterios de fe: orthobheder dhormo guit" (Song on the mysteries of Faith), and the other at p. 353 headed "Cantiga Ao Menino Jesus Recem nacido: Baloq Jesuzer guit zormo xttane xoia" (বালক যেস্থসের গীত জর্মস্থানে শুইয়া). (Song on infant Jesus newly born).

1 The copy, as we have it, is probably incomplete ; for p. 380 is not apparently the end of the book and some pages seem to have been lost thereafter. The copy also wants the title-page, pp. 33-48, 155-158, 321-336, pp. 371-372 *incl*. and all after p. 380.

The book may be interesting as an early explanation of the Roman Catholic doctrine, but its chief value, to an historian of Bengali literature, lies in its being the first important and sustained Bengali composition by a European author.[1] It gives us the earliest specimen of "Missionary Bengali", as it had existed before Carey, Marshman and their colleagues took the field; and its Bengali is certainly more homely and well-written than the stiff and groping language of Carey's *Dharma-pustak*. One is tempted to quote specimens at greater length from this interesting work but space forbids quotation of more than one or two illustrative extracts.[2]

1 Father Guérin, who brought out an edition of this work from Chandan-nagar (where he was attached to the Church of St. Louis) in 1836, states in the Latin preface to that edition that the Portuguese portion only was written by Manoel, while the Bengali portion was the work of some Bengali Christian at Bhawal. But of this there is no evidence. Father Guérin's edition, a copy of which was lent to the present writer by Father L. Wauters of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, Dharmatala, Calcutta, is interesting, though its Bengali is certainly not so remarkable. It is published in Bengali characters and named কৃপার শাস্ত্রের অর্থবেদ (not ভেদ). It is entirely re-written and remodelled and, there is a Latin preface. Nearly two-thirds of the original is expunged as being apocryphal and objectionable, while three new dialogues are added, also a list of solar and lunar eclipses calculated for Bengal from 1836 to 1904. The scope and contents of the work will be sufficiently explained by its title: Catéchisme / suivi / de trois dialogues/et de la liste/des Eclipses de soleil et de lune/ calculées pour la Bangale à partir de 1836 jusqu'en 1904 inclusivement. /Nouvelle edition, revue et eorrigée. কৃপার শাস্ত্রের অর্থবেদ/ স্র্য্যের আর চন্দ্রের গ্রহণ গণনার সহিত ১৪০ বৎসরের / আরম্ভ ১৮৩৬ সাল অবধি / সহর চন্দন নগর / এবং সমস্ত বাঙ্গালা দেশের নিমিত্তে/ করিয়াছেন জাকবছ ফ্রানছিস্কাস মারিয়া গেরেন/ চন্দন নগরের সর্ব্বগ্রাহ্যর পাদরী / দ্বিতীয়বার এবং শুদ্ধরূপে শ্রীরামপুরে মুদ্রাঙ্কিত হইল/ সন ১৮৩৬/ It is interesting to note that Father Guérin himself was an assiduous student of Astronomy and published after his return to England a work on Indian Astronomy in 1847.

2 For other specimens, see *Baṅgīya Sāhitya Pariṣat Patrikā* (1323, vol. 23, p. 179).

SPECIMENS OF ITS LANGUAGE AND STYLE

Hail Mary

Pronam Maria/ Crepae purnit : / Tomaté Tahacur assen : / Dhormi tomi/ Xocol xtrir loquer moidh/ Dhormo phol/ Tomar udore/ Jesus. / Xidha Maria/ Poromexorer Mata/ Xadho amora papir caron/ eqhone, ar/ Amardiguer mirtur calé. / Amen Jesus[1].

The second extract is a story illustrating the efficacy of the Cross in warding off the powers of evil:

Guru: Boro Axchorzio cotha cohila ; emot hoe. ar coho ; xidhi crux corile Bhuter cumoti ni dur zae ?

Xirio. Hoe ; bhuter cumoti dur zae, ebong Bhute o polae. Ehi xonar proman xono.

Eq rahoal merir assilo ; tahare Bhute bazi dia cohilo : tui zodi amar nophor hoite chahix, ami tore oneq dhan diham. Racoale cohiló: bhalo, tomar dax hoibo tomi amaré dhon dibá. Bhute cohilo : tabe amar golam hoile tor uchit nohe dhormo ghare zaite ; ebong xidhi Crux ar codachitio coribi na, emot ze core xe amar golam ; ehi amar agguia, taha palon coribi ; emot zodi na corix, tomare boutthboutth tarona dibam. Raqhoale cohilo : zaha agguia coro, taha coribo ; zodi emot na cori, tomar za iccha, xei hoibeg.

Oneq din obhaguia Raqhoale bhuter xacri coriló. tahar por eq din munixio bol coria reqholaque dhoria dhormo ghore loia guelo. Dhormo ghore eq Padri assilen, xei boro xadhu. tini loq xocolere cohilen : Tomara raqhoaler upore xidhi Crux coró. Emot loq xocole corilo. Toqhon bhute boró cord coria raqhoalerá oneq tarona dite laguilo. Eha deqhia Padre raqhoálque dhorilen, bhutere taroná dité

1 প্রণাম মারিয়া কৃপাত্র পূর্ণিত ; তোমাতে ঠাকুর আছেন : ধর্মী তুমি সকল স্ত্রীর লোকের মইধ (মধ্য)। ধর্মফল তোমার উদরে জিসাস। সিদ্ধা মারিয়া পরমেশ্বরের মাতা। সাধ আমরা পাপীর কারণ এখানে, আর আমারদিগের মৃত্যুর কালে। আমেন্ জিসাস্ ॥

mana corilen. Tobe Bhute aro bex cord coria Padriré cohiló; Ehi munixió amar dax, amar agguia bhanguilo, tahare xaxtti dibar uchit : tahare eria deo : na : tomare o xaxtti dibam. Padri cohilen : tahare eria dibo na : amare zaha corite parix, taha coró. Tobé bhuté emot cumontra corilo, ze Padrir muqh beca hoilo. Eha deqhia loq xocolé ghore polaia guelo.

Toqhon Padri xidhi crux corilen: ebong muqh xidhá hoilo. Tahar par ar Crux corilén raqhoaler upore ; ebong Crux coria Bhuté polaia gueló. Raqhoale o calax hoilo, calax hoia tahar xocol oporád confessor corilo ; Nirmol dhormo o bhocti rupe loilo, ebong punorbar pailo ze crepa haraiassilo pap caria[1].

1 গুরু বড় আশ্চর্য্য কথা কহিলা ; এমত হয়। আর কহ ; সিদ্ধি ক্রুশ করিলে ভূতের কুমতি নি দূর যায়?

শিষ্য। হোয় ; ভূতের কুমতি দূর যায় এবং ভূতেও পলায়। এহি শোনার প্রমাণ শোনো।

এক রাহোয়াল (রাখাল) মেড়ির আছিল। তাহারে ভূতে বাজি দিয়া কহিল, তুই যদি আমার নফর হইতে চাহিস্, আমি তোরে অনেক ধন দিবাম। রাকোয়ালে কহিলো : ভালো, তোমার দাস হইব, তোমি আমারে ধন দিবা। ভূতে কহিল : তবে আমার গোলাম হইলে তোর উচিত নহে ধর্ম্মঘরে যাইতে, এবং সিদ্ধি ক্রুশ আর কদাচিতিও করিবি না, এমত যে করে সে আমার গোলাম, এহি আমার আজ্ঞা, তাহা পালন করিবি ; এমত যদি না করিস্ তোমারে বহুত বহুত তাড়না দিবাম। রাখোয়ালে কহিল : যাহা আজ্ঞা কর, তাহা করিব। যদি এমত না করি, তোমার যা ইচ্ছা সেই হইবেক।

অনেক দিন অভাগ্য রাখোয়ালে ভূতের চাকরি করিলো। তাহার পর একদিন মুনিষিঅ (মনুষ্য) বল করিয়া ধর্ম্মঘরে লইয়া গেল। ধর্ম্মঘরে এক পাদ্রী আছিলেন সেই বড় সাধু। তিনি লোক সকলেরে কহিলেন, তোমরা রাখোয়ালের উপরে সিদ্ধি ক্রুশ করো। এমত লোক সকলে করিল। তখন ভূতে বড় কোর্দ (ক্রোধ) করিয়া রাখোয়ালেরা অনেক তাড়না দিতে লাগিল। এহা দেখিয়া পাদ্রী রাখোয়ালকে ধরিলেন, ভূতেরে তাড়না দিতে মানা করিলেন। তবে ভূতে আরো বেশ কোর্দ্ধ (ক্রোধ) করিয়া পাদ্রীরে কহিলো, এহি মূনষিও (মনুষ্য) আমার দাস, আমার আজ্ঞা ভাঙ্গিল,

VOCABULARIO EM IDIOMA BENGALLA E PORTUGUEZ: FIRST BENGALI GRAMMAR AND DICTIONARY, 1743

The second important work of Manoel da Assumpçao which deserves mention as being perhaps the first grammar and dictionary of the Bengali language is entitled *Vocubulario em Idioma Bengalla e Portuguez*[2] *dividido em duas partes*, published at Lisbon in 1743. This book is mentioned in the Catalogue of the British Museum ; and Grierson, in his *Linguistic Surrey*[3] has given a short account of this notable work. In the first forty pages of the *Vocabulario*, is given a compendium of Bengali grammar: the rest of the book being divided into two parts, viz. vocabulary, Bengali-Portuguese, pp. 47-306 and Portuguese-Bengali, pp. 307-577. Like the last mentioned work *Cathecismo*, it is written throughout in Roman character, the words again being spelt according to the rules of Portuguese pronunciation.

তাহারে শাস্তি দিবার উচিত, তাহারে এড়িয়া (?) দিও না, তোমারেও শাস্তি দিবাম। পাদ্রী কহিলেন তাহারে এড়িয়া দিব না, আমারে যাহা করিতে পারিস্ তাহা করো। তবে ভূতে এমত কুমন্ত্র করিল যে পাদ্রীর মুখ বেকা (বাঁকা) হইল। এহা দেখিয়া লোক সকলে ঘরে পলাইয়া গেল।

তখন পাদ্রী সিদ্ধি ক্রুশ করিলেন, এবং মুখ সিধা হইল। তাহার পর আর ক্রুশ করিলেন রাখোয়ালের উপরে, এবং ক্রুশ করিয়া ভূতে পলাইয়া গেলো। রাখোয়ালেও খালাস হইল। খালাস হইয়া তাহার সকল অপরাধ কন্‌ফেসার করিল ; নির্মল ধর্ম ভক্তিরূপে লইল। এবং পুনর্বার পাইল যে কৃপা হারাইয়াছিল পাপ করিয়া।

2 The full title is this: Vocabulario em Idioma Bengalla e Portuguez, dividido em duas partes, dedicado ao Excellent e Rever. Senhor D. Fr. Miguel de Tavora, Arcebispo d' Evora do Concelho de sua Magestade Foy delegencia do Padre Fr. Manoel da Assumpaçam Religioso Eremita de Santo Agostinho da Congregaçao da India Oriental, Lisbon 1743. A facsimile of this title-page is given in *Bāṅgālā Sāmayik Sāhitya* by Kedarnath Majumdar, vol. i. 1917 p. 17.

3. Vol. v. pt. i. p. 23. For a brief account of the work by the present writer see *IHQ*, June 1925, pp. 318-22.

DON ANTONIO'S *CATECHISM* IN BENGALI, 1743

Besides these two original works, a third is also said to be associated with the name of Manoel. The existence of this book was first made known by Father Thirso Lopes of Valladolid, Spain, in his note contributed to Father Hosten's paper in *Bengal Past and Present* (vol. ix, pt. i, p. 41). The note runs thus: "A Catechism of the Christian Doctrine in the form of a dialogue. It was printed in 8vo. at Lisbon in 1743 by Francisco da Silva. The contents are: A discussion about the Law between a Christian Catholic Roman, and a Bramene or Master of the Gentoos. It shows in the Bengalla tongue the falsity of the Gentoo sect and the infallible truth of our holy Roman Catholic faith, in which alone is the way of salvation and the knowledge of God's true Law. Composed by the son of the King of Busna, Don Antonio[1], that great Christian Catechist, who converted so many Gentoos; it was translated into Portuguese by Father Frey Manoel Assumpçao, a native of the city of Evora, and a member of the Indian Congregation of the Hermits of St. Augustine, actually Rector of the Bengalla Mission, his object being to facilitate to the Missionaries their discussions in the said tongue with the Bramenes and Gentoos. It is a dialogue between the Roman Catholic and the Gentoo Bramene. Written in two columns, Bengalla and Portuguese."

PROTESTANT MISSIONARIES BEFORE CAREY

From the above account, it will be seen that although there is evidence enough to show that the Roman Catholic missionaries at one time were very active in this country,

1 Hosten, in *Bengal Past and Present*, loc. cit., gives an account of this semi-legendary figure from *O Chronista de Tissuary*, vol. ii. 1867, pp. 57-58. In the year 1663, a son of the King of Busna was taken prisoner by the Mogos and led to Arracao, when one of the Fathers, Manoel do Rozario, ransomed him and converted him to Roman Catholic Christianity. After his conversion, he was called Don Antonio do Rozario, after St. Anthony who is said to have appeared to him in a dream.

especially in East Bengal, yet not much trace is left of their direct or indirect connexion with the language or literature of this country. Indeed, before Carey, missionaries confining themselves, as they did, exclusively to their proselytising work never seriously took either to educating the people of this country or writing in their language. There was as yet no Protestant Mission to Bengal. The only well-known missionary, before Carey, who visited this country was Kiernander, of whom we shall have occasion to speak later on ; but Kiernander, himself ignorant of the language, is in no way connected with our present enquiry. Of Kiernander's associates, however, there was one Bento de Silvestre (*alias* de Souza), who seems to have written a Bengali Catechism and a Book of Common Prayer in Bengali. Bento is said to have been born in Goa about 1728[1] of European parentage, and his sojourn in Bengal extended from thirteen[2] to fifteen[3] years spent mostly at Calcutta and Bandel. He was for many years an Augustinian friar but he abjured the Pope before Kiernander on February 7, 1766[4], whereupon he was appointed Catechist of the Mission at £20 a year and is reputed to have been a zealous preacher in Portuguese and to have translated large portions of the Book of Common Prayer and the Catechism into Bengali, entitled probably *Praśnottara-mālā* and *Prarthanā-mālā.* His books are said to have been published by the Society for the promotion of Christian knowledge and printed in London.[5] Bento knew French, Portuguese, Bengali, and Hindustani. He died probably

1 Carey, *Oriental Christian Biography*, Calcutta 1850, vol. ii, p. 182.

2 Hyde, *Parochial Annals of Bengal*, Calcutta 1901, p. 155.

3 Carey, *op. cit.* p. 182.

4 Carey, *op. cit.* gives different dates: at p. 182, vol. ii, the date given is July, 1769: while in the same volume at p. 290, the date is 1768. The story of his public abjurgation of Roman Catholic faith is given in vol. ii, at p. 182.

5 For further details, see paper by the present writer in the *Pratibhā* (Dacca), Māgh, 1322 B.S. References to Bento will be found in Carne, *Lives of Eminent Missionaries* (London 1833) in the article on

in 1786 at the age of fifty eight. The date of publication of his books is unknown. Nagendra Nath Basu gives 1765 as the date of publication of *Praśnottara-mālā* ; but this seems to be hardly correct, for Bento must have composed this work, after he was appointed Catechist, *i.e.* after 1766 (according to Hyde) or after 1768-69 (according to Carey).

So far as we can trace, these are the earliest names on the list of foreign benefactors to the vernacular literature of Bengal. But we do not find any serious and definitely important achievement in the field, until we come to the more well-known name of Nathaniel Brassey Halhed.

NATHANIEL BRASSEY HALHED (1751-1830)

Since 1772 the East India Company had actually taken upon itself the entire responsibilities of administration ; and this made it almost a necessity for its civil servants to study the vernacular of the country which they had now begun to govern[1]. About this time Halhed, an able scholar, who had already achieved some literary reputation and had been a friend of Sheridan's[2], came out to Bengal as a civilian and applied himself with great assiduity to the study of the Bengali language. He is said to have attained so much proficiency in the language, both in its colloquial and literary aspects, that he had been known to disguise himself in native dress and pass as a Bengali in an assembly of Bengalis[3].

Kiernander ; also see *John Zachariah Kiernander* (Bap. Miss. Press, Calcutta 1877).

1 See the elaborate arguments set forth in the Preface (p. i.-xxv) to Halhed's *Grammar*, in favour of the study of the Bengali language by Europeans. See also Introduction to Forster's *Vocabulary*.

2 "We also learn that Nathaniel Brassey Halhed Esq. either himself or in collaboration with Richard Brinsley Sheridan translated the Epistles of Aristænetus into English metre in 1771." (*Gentleman's Magazine*, lxxxii, pt. 2, 1812, p. 132).

3 Rev. James Long, *A Descriptive Cataloque of Bengali Books*, 1855, p. 20 ; *Calcutta Review*, 1850, p. 134 : *Good Old Days of Hon'ble Company* vol. i, p. 235. But this story of Halhed's proficiency in Bengali seems to be doubtful : in the *Friend of India* (Aug. 1838),

Nathaniel Brassey Halhed was born on May 25, 1751, at Westminster. His father, William Halhed, decended from an old Oxfordshire family, was for eighteen years a Director of the Bank of England. Young Halhed was educated at Harrow under Sumner, and there began his friendship with Richard Brinsley Sheridan, in conjunction with whom he subsequently produced a verse-translation of Aristaenetus[1]. In 1768 he passed on to Christ Church, Oxford[2] where he made the acquaintance of William (afterwards Sir William) Jones, also a Harrow boy, who led him to study some of the Oriental lauguages. Having been jilted by Miss Linley in favour of Sheridan, he left England, having obtained a writership in the E. I. Company's Service. In India he attracted the notice of Warren Hastings at whose suggesion he translated what is known as the Gentoo Code between 1774-6 (First Edition 1776 ; Second Edition 1777). He returned to England in 1785 and the subsequent history of his life has little attraction for us. He was returned to Parliament in 1791 for

we read this, not of him, but of his nephew Nathaniel John Halhed (1787-1838), a Judge of the Dewānī Ādālat. John Halhed, we are informed, had such command over the language that he is said to have joined a *yātrā* party at Burdwan and passed there for a Bengali. See also R. G. Sanyal, *Reminiscences and Anecdotes*, vol. ii, p. 9. John Halhed, in Sanyal's work as well as in the *Bengal Obituary* (p. 204), is said to have been a son of the grammarian Halhed, which is clearly a mistake: for N. B. Halhed the grammarian, who married (before 1784) Helena Rebaut, a daughter of the Dutch Governor of Chinsura, died without any issue. See Impey's *Memoirs* by his son, p. 360 footnote ; also *Dictionary of National Biography*, Art. Halhed. That Halhed possessed a high degree of proficiency in the language and brought systematic study of Bengali within easy reach is undoubted and justifies Colebrooke's high eulogy (*Asiatic Researches*, vol. vii, 1799, p. 224): and to this is due the attribution of all sorts of apocryphal stories to his credit. For Nathaniel John Halhed, see Ramchunder Doss, *General Register of Hon. E. I. Co.'s Civil Servants on the Bengal Establishment*. Calcutta 1844, p. 155.

1 See *Gentleman's Magazine* lxxxii, 1812, pt. 2, p. 132 ; also *Literary Anecdotes of the 18th Century*, p. 124-5.

2 *Alumni Oxonienses*, Oxford 1888 ; Matric. July 13, 1768, aged 17.

Symington, Hampshire, which he represented till 1795. From this time he became associated with the teachings of the fanatic prophet Richard Brothers, attracted possibly by their resemblance to oriental mysticism with which he was familiar. In 1809 he obtained an appointment in the East India House. He died in London, February 18, 1830, and was buried at Petersham, Surrey[1].

GRAMMAR OF THE BENGAL LANGUAGE, 1778

In 1778[2] Halhed compiled and printed in Euglish a *Grammar of the Bengal Language*[3], one of the earliest and for some time the best introduction to the scientific study of the language[4] At this time we had no printing press possessing a set of Bengali punches; and the art of printing unknown, we had hardly any printed literature before this date. The history of the printing of this work, which was done in a

1 For further particulars, see *Asiatic Journal*, 1836, pp. 165-71; Teignmouth, *Memoirs of Sir William Jones*, London 1804, pp. 73, 431 and other references; *Gentleman's Magazine*, 1830 (pt. i, pp. 471-3), 1808 (pt. ii, p. 922), 1812 (p. 132); Moore, *Memoirs of Sheridan*, London 1825; *Impey's Memoirs* by his son, E. B. Impey, London 1857, pp. 355 et seq; Allibone, *Dictionary of British and American Authors*, vol. i: *Biographical Dictionary of Living Authors*, ed. J. Watkins and F. Shoberl, London 1816; *Dictionary of National Biography* (in two last mentioned works a list of Halhed's works is given); Nichols, *Literary Anecdotes*, vol. ii, p. 431.

2 The date is not 1784 as given in the *Bengal Obituary*, p. 337. Smith, *Life of Carey*, repeats the mistake (New Ed. 1912, p. 159).

3 *A Grammar of the Bengal Language* by Nathaniel Brassey Halhed. Printed at Hooghly in Bengal. MDCCLXXVIII (1778). The book is very scarce but copies may be found in the National Library, Calcutta, Baṅgīya Sāhitya Pariṣat Library and Śrīrāmpur College Library.

4 The first Bengali grammar and dictionary, so far as it can be traced, was, as we have seen, in Portuguese. A curious request appears in the *Calcutta Gazette*, April 23, 1789, beseeching "any gentleman" to undertake for public benefit the composition of a Bengali Grammar (Seton-Karr, *Selections from Cal. Gazette*, ii. 497). It seems that by that time Halhed's *Grammar* had already become scarce and the necessity for a fresh grammar was keenly felt.

press at "Hooghly in Bengal" marks an era in the history of Bengali literature. It is chiefly to the exertion of the ever memorable Caxton of Bengal, Charles (afterwards Sir Charles) Wilkins, a Bengal Civilian and oriental scholar, that we are indebted for the beautiful types which he had himself prepared and in which art he had instructed the Bengali mechanics, thus introducing, as he did, the art of printing into this country. It is impossible to exaggerate the services thus rendered by this philanthropic Englishman, not only to the cause of vernacular literature but also to the general culture of the people, for it is undoubted that without this useful art of printing the general education of the people under modern conditions could not have been possible.

SIR CHARLES WILKINS 1750-1836

Charles Wilkins was born at Prome, Somerset, in 1750, son of Walter Wilkins of that town. He came to Bengal in 1770 in the service of the East India Company as a writer and became superintendent of the Company's Factories at Maldah. "About 1778", he writes, his "curiousity was excited by the example of his friend Halhed", to commence the study of Sanskrit and Persian; the vernaculars he had previously studied. He left India for health in 1786 and re-entered the service of the Company in 1800 as Librarian and Custodian of Oriental Manuscripts, which had been taken at the Fall of Seringapatam and elsewhere. He was also attached to the Haileybury College from its foundation in 1805. While in India he co-operated with Sir William Jones in the foundation of the Asiatic Society of Bengal and was a valuable contributor to the earlier volumes of the *Asiatic Researches*. He was an F. R. S. (1788); a D. C. L. of Oxford (1805); an Associate of the Institute of France; and the Royal Society of Literature awarded him its medal as "princeps litteraturae Sanscritae". He was knighted in 1833. He died in London, May 13, 1836.

and was interred at the Chapel in Portland town[1]. To such a great scholar, Bengal owes the establishment of the first vernacular printing press[2].

EXTRACT FROM THE PREFACE TO HALHED'S *GRAMMAR* INDICATING THE DIFFICULTIES OF PRINTING

The Preface to Halhed's *Grammar* sets forth some interesting details as to the difficulties which Wilkins has to overcome and as to how with patient perseverance he ultimately succeeded. "Public curiosity" it says "must be strongly excited by the beautiful characters which are displayed in the following work; and although my attempt may be deemed incomplete or unworthy of notice, the book itself will always bear an intrinsic value from its containing as extraordinary an instance of machanic abilities as has perhaps ever appeared. That the Bengal letter is very difficult to be imitated in steel will be readily allowed by any person who shall examine the intricacies of the strokes, the unequal length and size of the characters, and the variety of their positions and combinations. It was no easy task to procure a writer accurate enough to prepare an alphabet of similar and proportionate body throughout, and with that symmetrical exactness which is necessary to the regularity and neatness of a

1 For a list of his oriental works and other particulars, see *Asiatic Journal*, 1836, pp. 165-71 ; *Annual Register* for 1836 ; *Alumni Oxonienses*, Oxford 1888 ; *Biographical Dictionary of Living Authors*, ed. J. Watkins and F. Shoberl, London 1816 ; *Dictionary of National Biography* ; *Centenary Volumes of the Asiatic Society of Bengal* ; *Journal of American Oriental Society*, 1880, vol. x ; Preface to Sir William Jones's *Śakuntalā* and to Wilkins' *Sanscrit Grammar* ; *Notice of the Life of H. T. Colebrooke*, by his son, p. 7: Wilkins' translation of the *Bhagavadgītā* (1785) with an introductory letter by Warren Hastings. See *Cal. Rev.* vol. iii. 234 ; Seton-Karr, *Selections from the Calcutta Gazette*, i. 130.

1 About the first introduction of printing in the East, see Dr. Garnett's paper read before the Second International Library Conference (*Transactions and Proceedings of the Second International Library Conference held in London 1897*, London, 1898).

fount. Mr. Bolts (who is supposed to be well-versed in this language) attempted to fabricate a set of types for it with the assistance of the ablest artist in London. But as he has egregiously failed in executing even the easiest part, or the primary alphabet, of which he has published a specimen, there is no reason to suppose that his project, when completed, would have advanced beyond the normal state of imperfection to which new inventions are constantly exposed. The advice and even the solicitation of the Governor-General prevailed upon Mr. Wilkins, a gentleman who has been some years in the India Company's Civil Service in Bengal, to undertake a set of Bengali types. He did and his success has exceeded every expectation. In a country so remote from European artists, he has been obliged to charge himself with all the various occupations of the Metallurgist, the Engraver, the Founder and the Printer. To the merit of invention he was compelled to add the application of personal labour. With a rapidity unknown in Europe, he surmounted all obstacles which necessarily clog the first rudiments of a difficult art as well as the disadvantages of solitary experiment; and has thus singly on the first effort exhibited his work in a state of perfection which in very part of the world has appeared to require the united improvements of different projectors and the gradual polish of successive ages."[1]

THE SIGNIFICANCE AND IMPORTANCE OF WILKINS' WORK TO BENGALI LITERATURE

It must be remembered that these labours of Wilkins did not end merely in the temporary and isolated benefit of printing a grammar but had far deeper and more wide-reaching effects, for Wilkins had taken care that his work should pro-

1 Preface pp. xxiii-iv. See also the letter of George Perry to Mr. Nicols, the printer, dated Calcutta, October 1, 1783, quoted in the *Biographical Dictionary of Living Authors*, p. 385. This press cannot be traced, but Marshman (*History of Serampore Mission*, vol. i) says that it was set up by one Mr. Andrews, a bookseller.

duce lasting results. He had taught the art with great care to his Bengali assistant, one Pañcānan, a blacksmith by caste, whom later on providence brought to Śrīrāmpur in search of work, just at the time when Carey and his colleagues were in despair for a fount of Sanskrit and vernacular types. Pañchānon and his associates, to whom he had communicated his art, succeeded in course of time in domesticating it in Bengal.[1]

HALHED'S *GRAMMAR*; ITS INTEREST AND VALUE

Halhed's *Grammar* possesses a peculiar interest for us as being one of the earliest efforts to study the language in a scientific way. Halhed himself is perfectly conscious of the difficulties of such a study and says in the Preface (p. xix): "The path which I have attempted to clear was never before trodden. It was necessary that I should make my own choice of the course to be pursued and of the landmarks to be set up for the guidance of future travellers."[2] But barring this antiquarian interest, it can hardly be expected to possess any other value to us. It was obviously written for the benefit of the Europeans who wanted to study the foreign vernacular;[3] and as such it was bound to be written entirely from their standpoint. Of course it is well to study the spirit with which foreigners approach our language, but as a pioneer work and

1 See *Memoir Relative to the Translation of the Sacred Scriptures into the Languages of the East at Serampore* by J. Marshman, 1816; also Marshman, *Hist. of Serampore Mission*, vol. i.

2 The curious motto prefixed to the book says:

ইন্দ্রাদয়োহপি যস্যান্তং ন যয়ুঃ শব্দবারিধেঃ ।
প্রক্রিয়ান্তস্য কৃৎস্নস্য ক্ষমো বক্তুং ন : কথং ।।

Carey acknowledges to have derived much help in writing his *Bengali Grammar* from Halhed's work; see Preface to Carey's *Grammar* (1st Ed. 1801); see also E. Carey, *Life of Carey*, p. 247.

3 On the title-page we read:

বোধপ্রকাশং শব্দশাস্ত্রং ফিরিঙ্গিনামুপকারার্থং
ক্রিয়তে হালেদঙ্গ্রেজী ।

as one intended for mere beginners, uninitiated into the language, its value is greatly diminished. Even a cursory glance at the contents will show that the arrangement and division of the subject-matter is made chiefly on the plan of English grammars, beginning with the Elements (Chap. I), proceeding with Substantives (Chap. II), Pronouns (Chap. III), Verbs (Chap. IV), Words denoting Attributes and Relations (Chap. V), Numerals (Chap. VI) and ending with a brief discussion of Syntax (Chap. VII), Orthography and Versification (Chap. VIII)[1]. The rules laid down are more or less general and elementary ; but some attempt is made to arrive at broad underlying principles, although in a somewhat tentative or experimental fashion. The arrangement is as comprehensive as possible but the author is scrupulously minute in his insertion of examples to every rule and is rather prolix in his obseīvations upon general grammar. One merit of the book consists, however, in the fact that Halhed was fully alive to the intimate relation of Bengali to Sanskrit, "of which language" he says "I have thought necessary to include within my design such of the grammatical principles as might throw a direct or even a collateral light on those of the Bengalese.........I wished to obviate the recurrence of such erroneous opinions as may have been formed by the few Europeans who have hitherto studied the Bengalese ; none of them have traced its connections with Sanscrit, and therefore I conclude their systems imperfect" (Preface, p. xix et seq.). Of course attention to Sanskrit is indispensable in writing a Bengali grammar, but Halhed's work more or less presents Bengali as derived exclusively from its parent Sanskrit. He remarks at some length on the exceedingly

1 But it is curious to note that ক্ষ is included in the list of consonants. The orthography seems to have been yet unsettled and the border line between colloquial and literary language seems to have been crossed very often, possibly owing to the difficulty of a foreigner in entering into the genius of an alien tongue.

corrupt state of the dialect of time[1], and says that "a grammar of the pure Bengal dialect cannot be expected to convey a thorough idea of the modern jargon of the kingdom. The many political revolutions it has sustained have greatly impaired the simplicity of the language, and a long communication with the men of different religions, countries and manners, has rendered foreign words in some degree familiar to a Bengal ear. The Mahomedans have for the most part introduced such terms as relate to the functions of their own religion or the exercise of their own laws and government; the Portuguese have supplied them with appellation of some European arts and inventions; and in the environs of such foreign colony the idioms of the native Bengalese is tinctured with that of the strangers who have settled there. Upon the same principle since the influence of the British nation has superseded that of its former conquerors, many terms of British derivation have been naturalised into the Bengal vocabulary."

It cannot be doubted for a moment that the book holds a high place as one of the earliest of a series of attempts, valuable even to the present day, to study the vernacular scientifically, but if we leave aside this antiquarian and scientific interest, it can harldy be expected to come within literature proper. To the historian of literature, however, it is valuable, as most of these pioneer works are, for affording one of the earliest links in the revived study of the language itself.

OTHER SPECIMENS OF EARLY PRINTING

We pass over other specimens of early printing which the exigencies of administrative changes and the establishment of the Supreme Court (1774) brought into existence. Among

1 There will be found a curious appendix to this book containing a petition replete with Perso-Arabic expressions, showing how far modern Bengali had been forced to debase its purity by the necessity of addressing itself to Muhammedan rulers. In the Preface to his *Vocabulary*, Forster similarly speaks of studiously avoiding "Persian or Arabic pedantisms."

these are to be found the Impey Code in Bengali[1], which was translated by Jonathan Duncan, afterwards Governor of Bombay, and printed at the "Company's Press" in 1785, and the famous Cornwallis Code of 1793[2] which was translated by H. P. Forster, "a merchant on the Bengal Establishment", of whom we shall have occasion to speak hereafter. It was likewise printed at the Government Press but from an improved fount[3]. We read of two other early publications in the Catalogue of Bengali Works in the British Museum[4] viz. (*a*) Bengal translation (by N. B. Edmonstone)[5] of Regulation for the administration of Justice in the Fouzdary or Criminal Courts in Bengal, Behar and Orissa, passed by the Governor General in Council on the 3rd December, 1790, Calcutta 1791 ; (*b*) Bengal Translation (by N. B. Edmonstone) of the Regulations for the guidance of the Magistrates passed by the Governor-General in Council in the Revenue Department on the 18th May, 1792, with supplementary enactments, Calcutta 1792.

1 *Regulations for the Administration of Justice, in the Court of the Dewanee Adaulat, passed in Council, the 5th July, 1785, with a Bengali Translation* by Jonathan Duncan, Calcutta 1785, pp. 215-31. Jonathan Duncan (b. May 15, 1756—d. Aug. 11, 1811) came out to India as a Civil Servant in 1772 and became Governor of Bombay from 1795 to 1811.

2 The title-page says : শ্রীযুক্ত নবাব গবর্ণর জেনারেল বাহাদুরের হুজুর কৌন্সেলের ১৭৯৩ সালের তাবৎ আইন। তাহা নবাব গবর্ণর জেনারল বাহাদুরের হুজুর কৌন্সেলের আজ্ঞাতে মুদ্রাঙ্কিত হইল। ১৭৯৩। Second Edition in 1826.

3 "It is to this fount that Carey alludes, and it continued to be the standard of typography till it was superseded by the smaller and neater fount at Serampore." Marshman, *Life and Times of Carey, Marshman and Ward*, 1859, vol. i., p. 71.

4 Blumhardt, *Catalogue of Bengali Book in the British Museum*, p. 8.

5 Edmonstone (b. Dec. 6, 1765—d. May 4, 1841) came out to India as a Civilian in 1783.

FORSTER'S *VOCABULARY*, THE FIRST BENGALI-ENGLISH DICTIONARY 1799-1802

The next important work in our survey is Forster's *Vocabulary*, the first dictionary of the language ; and it will detain us for a moment, as it was indeed a work of merit and for a long time considered to be the most authoritative and standard publication on the subject[1].

HENRY PITTS FORSTER 1716-1815

Henry Pitts Forster, born[2] in 1761, of whose early life little seems to be known, entered Bengal Service of the Company on August 7, 1783, and rose to be the Collector of Tipperah in 1793 and Registrar of the Dewānī 'Ādālat of the 24 Parganas in 1794. In 1803-04, he was employed at the Calcutta Mint of which he rose to be the Master[3]. He died in India[4] on September 10, 1815. Besides *Vocabulary*, Forster also wrote an *Essay on the Principles of Sanscrit Grammar* (1810).

1 Carey based his famous *Dictionary of the Bengali Language* (1815-1825), the source of all dictionaries of later times, on Forster's *Vocabulary*. The first Bengali dictionary is, of course, Manoel da Assumpçao's *Vocabulario* in Portuguese, which has been already mentioned. In 1793 A. Upjohn compiled his ইঙ্গরাজি ও বাঙ্গালি বোথবিবলরি (Calcutta, The Chronicle Press). See Sajanikanta Das, *op. cit.* pp. 32-33.

2 *The Dictionary of National Biography* gives the hypothetical date of 1766 with a query. But it appears from the obituary notice in the *Calcutta Government Gazette* of 1815 (Sep. 14) and in the *Calcutta Monthly Journal* for September 1815 (p. 285) that Forster was aged 54 at the time of his death. In that case, his birth-date would be 1761, which is here adopted.

3 It appears from Dodwell and Miles, *Bengal Civil Servants*, 1839, (pp. 182-8: supp. list, pp. 600-1) that from 1798 to 1803 as well as from 1812 to 1815, Forster was out of employ. See also *Bengal Almanac and Annual Directory*, 1815, p. 9.

4 He died probably in Calcutta, but his burial place cannot be traced. There is no mention either in the *Bengal Obituary* or in De Rozario's *Monumental Register*. For further particulars of his life, see references quoted above ; also *Dictionary of National Biography* ; Allibone

VOCABULARY ; ITS SCOPE AND VALUE

The first part of the *Vocabulary* was published in 1799 : while the second part appeared[1] in 1802. The full title of the work, which will sufficiently explain its scope, is: "*A Vocabulary in two parts, English and Bengalee and vice versa* by H. P. Forster, Senior Merchant on the Bengal Establishment[2]." It is evident from the lengthy preface to this work as well as to that of Halhed that these early works were undertaken not on literary but mainly on political grounds. Bengali at this time, officially as well as popularly, was an unrecognised vernacular, and Forster rightly insists upon the absurdity and inconvenience of continuing the use of Persian in courts of law. It was thus due to the efforts of Halhed and Forster, seconded among Europeons by Carey and the Śrīrāmpur missionaries and among Bengalis by Rāmmohan Rāy and his friends, that Bengali not only became the official language of the

Dictionary of British and American Authors, Philadelphia 1859-75. Marshman. (*Life and Times of Carey etc.*, 1859, vol. i. p. 71) spells the name as Foster, which form is not correct.

1 In 1801 John Miller "compiled, translated and printed" a small work in three parts in about 140 pagas, called *The Tutor* or *New English and Bengalee work, well adapted to teach the Natives English* (শিক্ষ্যাগুরূ কিম্বা এক নৈতন ইংরাজি আর বাঙ্গালা বহি ভালো উপযুক্ত আছে বাঙ্গালিদিগেরকে ইংরাজি শিক্ষা করাইতে তিন খণ্ডে). The work is not a regular dictionary or vocabulary. It gives the alphabet, some elementary rules of grammar and some short stories. See notification in the *Calcutta Gazette*, dated August 26, 1802, in which "Mr. Forster has the pleasure to acquaint the subscribers of his Bengalee Vocabulary, that the second part is entirely printed off, and will be ready for delivery all in the present month of August and as he has more than doubled the size of the work beyond what he engaged, he hopes this will be admitted as a sufficient excuse for the delay in the publication." (Seton-Karr, *Selections from Calcutta Gazette*, vol. iii, p. 561). It is clear that the work was published in two instalments in 1799 and 1802.

2 Printed at Calcutta from the Press of Ferris and Co., 1799. Dedicated to Thomas Graham Esqr., dated December 15, 1799.

Presidency but it now ranks as one of the most prolific literary languages of India. One of the greatest difficulty, however, under which all compilers in this period had to labour and to which Forster himself, as his preface shows, was fully alive, was the exceedingly corrupt state of the language in its current 'dialect' form. There was no standard literature, or if there had been one it was long forgotten or was not so widely known as to ensure fixity of forms and expressions[1]. This corruption, however, was confined principally to revenue and judicial terms, and the more common and daily shifting colloquial expressions. But the greatest difficulty was felt in orthography which was in a hopelessly chaotic state, in these ante-printing days. "There never having been" says Forster, "a native Bengalee grammarian nor indeed any author of note......who might be considered as a standard, the orthography has consequently never been fixed ; and being current over an extensive country and among an illiterate people, almost every word has been and continues in one district or other to be variously spelt, and not infrequently so disguised as to render it

1 As the various quotations by way of illustration in Halhed's *Grammar* shows, he was not aware of the existence of more than half a dozen old Bengali works. He takes his passages mostly from *Mahābhārat* (from which he gives a lengthy quotation at pp. 37-42), *Rāmāyaṇ* and the various works of Bhāratchandra, still in vogue, especially his *Bidyāsundar*. Printing there was hardly any, and books mostly in manuscripts were not easily procurable. It is also notable that Halhed confines himself exclusively to examples taken from poetry and there is not a single prose quotation in his works. "I might observe" he writes, "that Bengali is at present in the same state with Greece before the time of Thucydides when Poetry was the only style to which authors applied themselves and studied prose was utterly unknown". The biographer of William Carey relates how (Smith, *op. cit.* p. 202) when Carey visited Nadīyā, not many years ago the illustrious centre of Bengali literature, "he could not discover more than 40 separate works, all in manuscripts, as the whole literature of 30,000,000 of people up to that time".

difficult to recognise it, when met in its genuine form in Songskrit. In such cases, I have not scrupled to adopt Songskrit orthography, unless I found the majority of the people whom I consulted, concur in any particular vitiated mode of spelling it." In spite of these difficulties, however, Forster succeeded in compiling one of the most valuable and painstaking lexicon of the language ever published, and the eulogy of Marshman that Forster was the "most eminent Bengali scholar till the appearance of Dr. Carey[1]" is fully justified.

THE ADVENT OF THE MISSIONARIES

The year in which Forster's *Vocabulary* was published saw another memorable but at that time an apparently unimportant event—the landing of a band of missionaries on the banks of the Ganges and the starting of a mission at Śrīrāmpur. A year later the Fort William College was established at Calcutta for imparting knowledge of the vernaculars to young civilians. With the Mission as its centre and the Fort William College as its public forum, Bengali language entered upon a new phase of development, hitherto undreamt of. Forster was, no doubt, followed by a band of earnest civilian workers, of whom the names of J.F. Ellerton[2] and Sir Graves C. Haughton are the most well-known, yet with the missionaries in the field, who, for years to come, had made education of the people and cultivation of the vernacular their own peculiar province, earlier work was eclipsed, and a fresh impetus was given to the vernacular literature. The experimental stage was not yet over, but what was desultory, spasmodic and slipshod became regular, unbroken

1 Marshman, *Life and Times of Carey etc.*, vol. i., p. 71.

2 Ellerton wrote his works before 1800 and, therefore, strictly speaking belongs to this chapter. But Ellerton's Bible-translations were not published until probably 1819: so an account of him will be found in the next chapter under the Bible-translations of the Śrīrāmpur missionaries.

and systematic: and for several years till the foundation of the Hindu College and the emergence of a new band of writers, the history of Bengali literature is closely bound up with the labours of the missionaries and schoolmasters, and especially of the brotherhood at Śrīrāmpur, associated with the names of Carey, Marshman and Ward whose devotion, earnestness and philanthropic purpose cannot be too highly spoken of.

CHAPTER IV

WILLIAM CAREY AND THE ŚRĪRĀMPUR MISSION

Of the missionary movements which gave an early impetus to Bengali language and literature, the foremost place has been given to the fraternity of the famous Śrīrāmpur Mission, which was started by Carey, Marshman and Ward but of which the moving spirit was William Carey.

WILLIAM CAREY (1761-1834)

William Carey, the son of a weaver and himself a village shoemaker till the age of twenty-eight, was born on August 17, 1761 in the village of Paulesbury, situated in the midland of England, in the heart of the district which not only produced Shakespeare and cherished Cowper but which also fostered Wyclif and Hooker, Fox and Bunyan. But village-life in those days was far from being elysian, and the destiny of the cottager, with poverty and sore toil staring him in the face, was cheerless enough. Buried in an obscure village, the eldest of a family of five children, young Carey seemed to be born to such a lot, the English labourer's lot of five shillings a week and the poorhouse in sickness and old age. At the age of sixteen he was an apprentice to the shoemaker's trade—a trade of which however he was never ashamed[1] and which linked him to the earliest missionaries of Alexandria, of Asia Minor and of Gaul, some of whom were shoemakers, and to a succession of scholars and divines,

1 "It would be silly in me to pretend to recollect all the shoes I made. I was accounted a very good workman...(Letter to Ryland)." There is no inconsistency between this and his famous retort to the general officer who inquired of one of the aides-de-camp, when dining with the Marquis of Hastings, whether Dr. Carey had not once been a shoemaker. "No, Sir, only a cobbler!" (quoted in Dr. Culross's *William Carey*).

poets and critics, reformers and philanthropists who had used the shoemaker's life to become illustrious. The picture of young Carey, keeping school by day, preaching on Sundays, and cobbling or making shoes by night, would remind one very forcibly of Carlyle's picture of George Fox in his *Sartor Resartus.* But all this time, in poverty that would have very soon crushed the spirit of an ordinary man, he went on with his studies, although books were rare in those days and not easy to be begged or borrowed by a country-boy. It is remarkable that his taste inclined him to books of travel, adventure, history and natural science to the exclusion of novels, plays and books on religious subjects. The religious earnestness which marked his later life had not yet dawned, and he had been hitherto a stranger to the gospel of Christ. A remarkable change took place in his life about his eighteenth year. He joined the small church which was formed at Hackleton and afterwards the Baptist congregation at Moulton where he became a pastor. His mind was at this time occupied in acquiring the learned languages and almost every branch of useful knowledge. It was about this time that his great thought about the practicability and importance of a mission abroad took definite shape in his mind. His extensive study of geography and books of travel convinced him painfully of the fact that a very small portion of the human race had yet possessed any knowledge of Christ and his religion. In order to impress his brethren with his new idea, he wrote and published "*An Enquiry into the Obligations of the Christians for the Conversion of the Heathens in which the Religious State of Different Nations of the World, the Success of Former Undertakings, are considered by William Carey*" (1792). This was the birth of England's foreign Mission in Bengal[1] for Carey would not remain idle until his project had been put into practice. At last, at a

1 Carey, however, was not the first English missionary to Bengal: this was one Mr. Clarke (see Hyde, *Parochial Annals of Bengal*, p. 213.)

meeting of the Northamptonshire Association of Baptist Churches held at Kettering (Northampton) on October 2, 1792, a Baptist Missionary Society was started on a humble scale for propagating the gospel. Carey set out for India on June 13, 1793. At first he had desired to go to Tahiti or West America. At this time, however, he met John Thomas, a medical evangelist, who had made two voyages to India and had some experience of Bengal[1]. It was Thomas who directed Carey to Bengal.

MISSIONS IN INDIA: CAREY'S PREDECESSORS

It must not be supposed, however, that the missionary spirit was unknown in Carey's time or that India was never before visited by missionary activity. On the contrary, many great names and great though mistaken movements will occur to the memory of every reader of Church history[2]. Not to go far back to the missionary zeal of Francis Xavier

1 See C. B. Lewis, *Memoirs of John Thomas the first Baptist Missionary to Bengal* (1871). Also Smith, *op. cit.* p. 41.

2 For details about the history of Christian Missions of which literature is vast, the following books may be conveniently consulted ; Brown's *History of the Propagation of Christianity*, 3 vols. (vol. ii deals with Indian Missions), Edinburgh 1854 ; Kaye's *History of Christianity in India*, London 1859 ; T. W. M. Marshall's *Christian Missions*, 2 vols. London 1863 ; J. Hough's *Christianity in India*, 2 vols. London 1839 ; Sherring's *History of Protestant Mission in India*, London 1884 ; and Marshman's *History of the Serampore Mission*. James A. Long's *Handbook to Bengal Missions* (London 1848) will also be found useful, with reference to the general educational activity of the missionaries. Duff's *India and Indian Missions* (Edinburgh 1840) and his articles in the earlier volumes of the *Calcutta Review* may also be consulted. On the Missions in the South, literature is vast. One may, however, consult with advantage, *Letters Edifiantes et Curieuses écrites de Missions Etrangères*, 26 vols. 1780-83, vols. x-xv specially refer to India ; Lacroze, *Histoire du Christianisme des Indes*, 2 vols. 1758 ; Bertrand, *La Mission du Maduré* 4 vols. 1847 ; Coleridge, *Life and Letters of St. Francis Xavier*. For a fuller bibliography on this subject, see A. C. Burnell, *A Tentative List of Books and MSS. relating to the History of the Portuguese in India*, Mangalore 1880.

or of the Moravian brotherhood in the East, we find, for the greater part of the 18th century (1707 to 1798), the Coast-Mission (as it was called) carrying on its missionary work in South India with Tranquebar as its centre. At one time it was a very powerful movement carried on by the Lutherans whom, from Zeingenbalg to Schwartz, Dr. Franke had trained at Halle and Frederick IV of Denmark had sent forth to its India Company's settlement in the South ; but when Carey landed, the Coast Mission, partly on account of the wars between the English and the French, was almost in a state of inanition. To Bengal there was, we have seen, Roman Catholic Mission but as yet no Protestant Mission from England. The only well-known missionary who came to Bengal before Carey, was Kiernandar the Swede[1], the "Mammon" of Hicky's *Gazette*, whom Clive in 1758 had brought to Calcutta where he thenceforth lived, meeting young Carey subsequently at Bandel at the great age of eighty-four. But Kiernander could not wield any influence on the masses[2] and had no literary pretensions whatever ; for although he started a native school and built a Church at his own cost, he was in the first place, rather a missionary to the Portuguese and their descendant who were nominal Christians of the lowest Romanist type: and in the next place, Kiernander could

1 See *Cal. Rev.*, 1847, vol. viii, pp. 124-184. Also Marshman, *History of Serampore Mission*, vol. i, p. 20, et seq. Carey calls Kiernander a German (E. Carey, *Memoirs of Carey*, p. 449.). See Marshall's *Christian Missions*, vol. i, p. 278. For Kiernander, see *Bengal Obituary*, p. 34 et seq : J. Carne, *Lives of Eminent Missionaries* 3 vols. London 1833-35 ; *Asiatic Journal*, vol. xv, 1834 ; W. H. Carey, *Oriental Christian Biography* (3 vols. Calcutta 1850-52) pp. 193 et seq; H. B. Hyde, *Parochial Annals of Bengal 1678-1788*, Calcutta 1901 ; *The Complete Monumental Register* by M. De Rozario (Calcutta 1815) p. 109-113 ; Busteed, *Echoes from Old Calcutta*, 1888 (New Ed. 1908) ; H. Cotton, *Calcutta Old and New* (Calcutta 1907) ; *John Zachariah Kiernander* (a pamphlet), Cal. Bap. Miss. Press 1877, etc.

2 Of Kiernander's clerical convert, Bento de Silvestre *alias* de Souza and his contribution to Bengali, mention has already been made above at p. 69-70.

never converse in Bengali or Hindustani and never cared to mix freely with the people of the country. Practically his work had made only the slightest impression, and it was no wonder therefore that Carey could find no trace of his work among the people even six years after his death.

CHARACTER OF THE CLERGY AND OPPOSITION OF THE EAST INDIA COMPANY TO CHRISTIAN MISSIONS

The condition of the clergy at this time, however, and their public and private morals did not any way make them attractive to or influential with the people of this country. It is well known that the East India Company not only adopted a policy of perfect neutrality towards the religions of India and never attempted to preach their religion themselves, but they also threw every possible obstacle in the way of the missionaries who wanted to settle in their territories. The ostensible ground was political but the real reasons are thus given by a writer in the *Calcutta Review* (1859): "The Missionary was the interloper *par excellence*, and the hate of a camel for a horse, of a snake for a mongoose, was feeble when compared with the hate of the Anglo-Indian for the Interloper. Partly from his training, partly from the first circumstances of the conquest, the Anglo-Indian official regarded India as his property, his peculium. An interloper was therefore in his eyes little better than a thief, a man who undersold him, interrupted his profits, and impaired his exclusive authority over the population. With the instinct which comes of self-defence he saw that the Missionary was the most dangerous of interlopers." Neither the character of the early founders of the British Empire as a body nor that of the clergy before the Śrīrāmpur mission was such as to inspire respect for their religion ; and of the clergy as a class, the Governor-General officially wrote to the Court of Directors as late as 1795 : "Our clergy in Bengal, with some exceptions, are not respectable characters."

CAREY'S ATTEMPTS AT SETTLEMENT

Although Carey and his fellow-missionary were allowed to enter Calcutta (November 10, 1793) without opposition, indeed without notice (so obscure they were), yet under the existing conditions of things he had to preach his religion for several years almost like a thief in constant fear of being deported to England. Quite destitute in Calcutta, he had no definite plan for the future. The congregration at home were too poor to give him any assistance, nor could they influence the authorities in England to allow him to settle down peacefully as a missionary, for the latter would instantly refuse to listen to a handful of country nobodies the chief among whom was a shoemaker. After several fruitless attempts to settle down, Carey at last succeeded in obtaining the situation of an assistant in charge of some indigo factories at Madnabati, near Maldah in June 1794. All these years however, the idea of translating the Bible and preaching in the language of the people was ever present in his mind. As soon as he could settle down, he applied himself to the study of Bengali which, his biographer tells us, the indefatigable scholar had already begun during the voyage, and of which the first indication is given by an entry in his journal two months after he had landed (January 1794). "This day" he writes "I finished the correction of the first chapter of Genesis, which Moonshi says is rendered into very good Bengali."[1] The Moonshi or Bengali teacher referred to was one Rām Basu who taught the language to Carey. The greatest difficulty, however, which puzzled him, as a foreigner, in learning the language relates to the unsettled state of its forms and expressions, of its grammar and orthography; and a vast difference seemed to him to exist between the literary language and its colloquial and dialectal forms. Thus he speaks with a characteristic naiveté

1 Smith, *op. cit.* p. 61; Eustace Carey, *Memoirs of William Carey*, London 1836, p. 119.

in a letter, dated October 2, 1795: "The lauguage spoken by the natives of this part, though Bengali, is so different from the language itself that though I can preach an hour with tolerable freedom so as that all who speak the language or can read or write, understand me perfectly: yet the poor labouring people can understand me little."[1] Indeed, a foreigner always finds it hard work to obtain in a year the endless variety of its idiom and the niceties of pronunciation ; but Carey certainly was very far from right when he says further that although the language is rich, beautiful and expressive, it has got scarcely a large vocabulary in use about religion and kindred subjects.[2] The whole trend of pre-British Bengali literature which is religious in subject will prove the inappropriateness of this hasty statement. The half-pitying and half-contemptuous tone in which Carey and his missionary colleagues speak of our forefathers as so many 'heathens,' or semi-barbarians[3] no doubt raises our smile today, but they in all sincerity, born of religious enthusiasm, really thought in this way. It is true indeed that there was a partial decadence of religious life and ideals in the country during the last years of the Muhammedan rule, yet Carey and his colleagues, in spite of their catholicity and tolerance, could never detect the signs of religious life which could produce the noblest songs of Rāmprasād. From the earliest times to the days of Rāmmohan Rāy and even to the present day, religion had, as we have already stated, a great influence on Bengali literature. The great personality of Chaitanya and his disciples, the songs of the Baiṣṇab poets, breathing as they do the purest language of poetry and devotion—all indicate what charm religion had always

1 E. Carey, *op. cit.* p. 242 ; Smith, *op. cit.* p. 72.

2 See his letter to the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, quoted in E. Carey, *op. cit.* p. 239.

3 He speaks of this country as one "devoted to the service of Satan and immersed in the awful ignorance of heathenness." E. Carey, *op. cit.* p. 294.

possessed for the people and their literature. The fact was, making every possible allowance to missionary fanaticism, that Carey, as he himself admits,[1] could lay his hand upon very few ancient Bengali books and manuscripts; and that with the decay of learning and culture in Bengal, the vernacular literature had come to be neglected, and for some time it had practically become non-existent. It was only natural, therefore, for these European scholars from Halhed to Yates, who were not aware of the existence of more than half a dozen Bengali works, to indulge in such sweeping and hasty statements.

HIS STUDY OF SANSKRIT AND ITS EFFECT

In his study of Bengali, Carey found out very early that without the classical Sanskrit, which he always regarded as "the parent of nearly all the colloquial dialects of India."[2], he could neither master Bengali nor enrich it with effective literary forms and combinations. If one must borrow, one might go to the literatures of Europe for themes and methods but the expression must always be indigenous. It is significant indeed that all early Bengali writers from Carey to Bidyāsāgar, whose writings have helped to create for us the Bengali prose, were learned in the Sanskrit language, and were therefore always ready to avail themselves of the rich treasures of forms and expressions which that classical language afforded. Carey applied himself to Sanskrit with so much industry that as early as April 1796 we find him writing home that he had made enough progress in the language to read the *Mahābhārata*; and that in 1798 he had compiled a Sanskrit grammar and the considerable portion of a Sanskrit-English dictionary.[3] It must be remembered that Sanskrit learning and literature were much patronised in those days,

1 Smith, *op. cit.* p. 202.

2 Preface to *Sanskrit Grammar* (1806).

3 See also his letter to Sutcliffe, June 16, 1798, quoted in E. Carey, *op. cit.* p. 323.

and the first step taken by the government towards the education of the native-born subjects was inspired by the desire for the promotion of Sanskrit scholarship.

WORK AT MADNABATI GIVEN UP

After six years in North Bengal as a missionary, scholar and indigo-planter, Carey found that a few insignificant village of two or three dozen mud-walled cottages hardly afforded sufficient scope for his missionary work. He was forming the project of a Mission Settlement on the Moravian model, but in 1799 the indigo works at Madnabati had to be given up. Carey had been thinking of taking a small indigo factory in the neighbourhood, when he learned that he was soon to be joined in his missionary work by four colleagues from England. The expected reinforcement consisted of Joshua Marshman and his wife, William Ward, Daniel Brunsdon[1] and William Grant. The original intention was to proceed to Maldah and settle with Carey at Madnabati. They arrived off Calcutta on October 12, 1799 in an American ship; but instead of landing, they proceeded to Śrīrāmpur where they could be safe under the protection of the Danish flag. Their object in choosing Śrīrāmpur as a mission-centre is thus given by Carey[2]; "At Serampore we can settle as missionaries, which is not allowed here; and the great ends of the mission, particularly the printing of the Scriptures, seem much more likely to be answered in that situation...In that part of the country inhabitants are far more numerous than in this; and other missionaries may be there permitted to join us, which here it seems they will not." In selecting this city instead of any other, they did what was best under the circumstances. "Had we stayed at Mudnabutty or its vicinity" Carey wrote "it is a great wonder we could have set up our press; Government would have suspected us,

1 For a sketch of Brunsdon's life, see W. H. Carey, *Oriental Christian Biography*, Calcutta 1850-52 (in three vols.) vol. i, pp. 170-72.

2 Smith, *op. cit.* p. 88.

though without reason to do so, and would, in all probability, have prevented us from printing; the difficulty of procuring proper materials would also have been almost insuperable."[1] Śrīrāmpur is situated in one of the richest and most densely peopled tracts in Bengal, very close to the metropolis; and it was here that the earliest Europen factories in Bengal were established, the Danes planting themselves at Śrīrāmpur, the French at Chandannagar, the Dutch at Chinsura, the English at Hugli, and the Portuguese at Bandel.

THE SERAMPORE MISSION

CAREY LEAVES NORTH BENGAL AND JOINS MARSHMAN AND WARD AT ŚRĪRĀMPUR (1800)

Two of the missionaries speedily fell victims to the climate. Marshman and Ward, whose names are indissolubly linked with that of Carey, who had taken up his residence with them on January 10,.1800, resolved to start systematic mission-work, forming a brotherhood somewhat on the idea of the Pentecostal Church. The mission in its disinterestedness, its lofty aims, and its kindly commonsense deserves sympathetic study. The spirit which animated them is to be clearly seen in the Form of Agreement, drawn up by them, which exhibits the high aims, the simple and disinterested life of work to which the Śrīrāmpur brethren bound themselves from the beginning. One of the principles which regulated the whole course of the Mission was that a missionary must consider himself as one of the companions and equals of the people to whom he had been sent, and that he must endeavour to gain a thorough knowledge of those among whom he laboured in their modes of thinking and feeling. This was what brought them nearer to the people and gained their confidence. They had started a school at Śrīrāmpur as early as May 1, 1800. In their letter to the Society at home, we find the missionaries writing on October

1 E. Carey, *op. cit.* p. 379-80.

10, 1800: "There appears to be a growing familiarity between us and the natives. They receive our printed papers with the greatest eagerness and we cannot doubt but that they are pretty extensively read."[1]

JOSHUA MARSHMAN (1769-1837)

Of the two fellow-workers of Carey, Joshua Marshman, son of a weaver and for sometime a bookseller's employee in London, was born at Westbury in Wiltshire, April 20, 1768. After much struggle and privation he succeeded in obtaining the mastership of a school in Bristol, and while living there he was baptised and volunteered to go out to India as an assistant to Carey. He was a man not only of great mental capacity, endowed with what the Scotch call "a long head", but he also had fine administrative ability which kept the missionary community in perfect order. William Ward, though inferior in intellectual equipment, was a man of great practical ability and sound common-sense. He was born at Derby on October 20, 1769.[3] The son of a builder, he had received some education and had been apprenticed to a printer. He rose to the position of the editor of the *Derby Mercury* and afterwards of a newspaper in Hull. It was at Hull five years before he came out to India, Carey had met Ward and said to him: "If the Lord bless us, we shall want a person of your business to enable us to print the Scriptures:

1 E. Carey, *op. cit.* p. 406.

2 For more details, see Marshman, *History of Serampore Mission*, 2 vols. (1859); *Bengal Obituary*, pp. 340-43; *Dict. of National Biography*; W. H. Carey, *Oriental Christian Biography*, vol. iii, pp. 257-65.

3 For more details, see *Hist. of Serampore Mission*. Also Samuel Stennett, *Memoirs of the Life of William Ward*, London 1825; *Bengal Obituary*, pp. 343-45, Calcutta 1851; *Dict. of National Biogr.*; Simpson's *Life* prefixed to Ward's *A View of the History, Literature and Mythology of the Hindus*, Serampore 1811; W. H. Carey, *Orient. Christ. Biography*, vol. ii, pp. 1-6 et seq.

I hope you will come after us." He joined the Church in 1796 and came out to India in 1799 at the invitation of Carey. His work like that of Marshman, from 1800, was connected, if not identified, with that of the Mission at Śrīrāmpur. Ward, however, had very little connexion with Bengali literature[1] except indirectly, much less than Carey and Marshman. He died suddenly of cholera at Śrīrāmpur on March, 1823.

PRINTING OF THE BENGALI BIBLE, 1801

One of the earliest works that the Mission accomplished was the printing of the New Testament in Bengali on Feb. 7, 1801 after a labour of nine months[2] and of the Old Testament between 1802 and 1809. Carey, while at Madnabati, had completed the translation of the greater portion of the Bible by the year 1798 with the exception of the historical books from Joshua to Job.[3] He had gone to Calcutta to

1 Ward, says Carey, could speak Bengali a little (E. Carey, *op. cit.* p. 424). Ward, however, wrote some tracts in Bengali which will be noticed hereafter.

2 Preface to the *Serampore Letters* (1800-1816) ed. by L. and M. Williams, New York 1892, with an introductory memoir by Thos. Wright; also see Marshman, *History of Serampore Mission*. But see *Bengal Obituary*, p. 338.

3 He had begun the translation as soon as he could fairly learn the language. We find him writing to Sutcliffe only a year after his arrival (Aug. 9, 1794): "The language (of Bengali) is copious and I think beautiful. I begin to converse in it a little.........I intend to send you a copy of Genesis, Matthew, Mark and James in Bengali; with a small vocabulary and grammar of the language, in manuscripts, of my own composition" (E. Carey, *op. cit.* p. 195). On July 17, 1796, he writes to Fuller that "almost all the Pentateuch and the New Testament are now completed" (*ibid* p. 265). By 1799, almost the whole of the Bible was translated. It is customary to attribute the authorship of the entire Bengali Bible to Carey, but from the report of the work given by him (*ibid* p. 345, Letter to Fuller, dated July 17, 1799) we find that in the first version, Fountain (d. Aug. 1800) and Thomas helped him much. Fountain translated 1 and 2 Kings, Joshua, Judges, Ruth, 1 and 2

obtain the estimates of printing but had found it beyond his slender means ; for the cost of printing 10,000 copies was estimated at nearly Rs. 43,750.[1] To have got it printed in England was well-nigh impracticable, for he had found that each punch would cost a guinea a piece.

THE PRESS AT SERAMPORE: PAÑCHĀNAN AND MONOHAR

After several fruitless attempts, when the project had appeared almost incapable of accomplishment, Carey saw a wooden printing press advertised in Calcutta for £40. He at once purchased it at Rs. 400 and set it up at Madnabati. It was from this old press, subsequently removed to Śrīrāmpur that the first edition of the Bengali New Testament was printed[2]. The types were set with the knowledge of a first-rate printer by Ward with his own hand, assisted by Carey's son, Felix[3]. The second edition was

Samuel and 2 Chronicles: while Thomas undertook Matthew, Mark (li-x), Luke, and James. All the rest was Carey's own as well as the whole correction. The correction, however, sometimes rendered the original version into quite a new work, especially in the case of Thomas's translation which was very incorrect and imperfect (*ibid* p. 323 ; *Periodical Accounts*, vol. i, pp. 20-21).

1 E. Carey, *op. cit.* p. 277 and also p. 368 ; see also p. 239.

2 Smith, *op. cit.* p. 181 ; E. Carey, *op. cit.* p. 330.

3 If we leave aside Ellerton's New Testament and Thomas's version of Genesis and other books of the Bible (1791), this is the first effort at an entire translation of the Bible into Bengali. Ellerton's version, however, was not published till 1820, and Thomas himself got much help from Carey in his translation.

Of John F. Ellerton (1768-1820), nothing much is known except that he was an indigo-planter and was the first to establish a Bengali school in Maldah. He wrote (1) মঙ্গল সমাচার মাত্তিউর রচিত। Calcutta 1819, (2) মঙ্গল সমাচার যোহন রচিত। Calcutta 1819, in Bengali and English (3) জগত্তারক প্রভু যিশু খ্রীষ্টের মঙ্গল সমাচার। or the New Testament, translated by J. F. Ellerton, Calcutta 1820, pp. 1-993. This last-mentioned work, though discontinued for a time on learning that Carey was engaged on a similar work was at last printed by the Calcutta Bible Society. See the *Fifteenth Report of the British and Foreign Bible*

published in 1803[1]: but it was prepared from a fount of more elegant and smaller size, constructed by Manohar. The story of its printing is thus told in the *Memoir relative to Translations*: "Happily for us and India at large Wilkins had led the way in this department; and persevering industry, under the greatest disadvantages with respect to materials and workmen, had brought the Bengali to a high degree of perfection. Soon after our settling at Serampore the providence of God brought to us the very artist who had wrought

Soc. London 1819, pp. 214 and 319; 1818, App. p. 24, (4) গুরু শিষ্যের প্রশ্নোত্তর ধারাতে/সৃষ্টাদির বিবরণ/বাঙ্গালা আর ইংরেজী ভাষাতে নয় অধ্যায়। or *an Account of/the Creation of the World/and of the First Age* in the form of dialogues/between a Master and his Pupil in Bengalee and English/by J. Ellerton/Calcutta/Printed for the Church Missionary Society/By P. Pereira/at the Hindoostanee Press/1820. On Ellerton see S. K. De in *IHQ*, June 1925, pp. 320 23, which gives specimens and an analysis of the nine chapters. In *Cal. Rev.* vol. viii, 1850, this work is probably referred to as গুরুশিক্ষা. For Thomas, see *Life of John Thomas* by C. B. Lewis, London 1873.—The books of the Old Testament, as printed by the Serampore Press (1801-9) are in 4 vols. viz. 1. Pentateuch, 1801; 2. Joshua-Esther, 1809; 3. Job-Song of Solomon, 1804; 4. Isiah-Malachi, 1805. According to the Serampore Memoirs, however, the correct dates of publication are: 1. 1802; 2. 1809; 3. 1803; 4. 1807. The Psalter appears to have been issued separately in 1803. A revised edition appeared in 1832. The New Testament was published in 1801. See Appendix II at the end of this volume for a note on Biblical translations. In *Cal. Rev.* x, p. 136, the date of Ellerton's New Testament is erroneously given as 1816. For John Thomas's translation of the scriptures, see Murdoch, *Catalogue of Christian Vernacular Literature of India*, Madras 1870, pp. 4 and 5, Smith, *op. cit.* p. 179. Thomas's version (before 1791) was circulated in manuscript. J. Kaye, *Christianity in India*, London 1859, p. 138, speaks of this version as having been done in "scarcely intelligible Bengalee." See Carey, *Orient. Christ. Biography* (Calcutta 1850-52), vol. i, pp. 444-454.

1 3rd Ed. 1811; 4th Ed. 1816; 8th Ed. 1832. The date in the text is the date of the 2nd Ed. as given by Marshman, but Smith (p. 188) gives 1806 as the date. The fact is that the edition was commenced in 1803 and completed in 1806.

with Wilkins in that work, and in a great measure imbibed his ideas. By his assistance, we erected a letter-foundry ; although he is now dead he had so fully communicated his art to a number of others, that they carry forward the work of type-casting, and even of cutting the matrices, with a degree of accuracy which would not disgrace European artists[1]." The artist referred to above as Wilkins' assistant was Pañchānan[2], of whom we have already spoken. Pañchānan's apprentice Manohar continued to make elegant founts of type in all the Eastern languages for sale as well as for the Mission, where he was "employed for 40 years, and to his exertion and instruction Bengal is indebted for the various beautiful types of Bengali, Nagri, Persian, Arabic and other characters which have been gradually introduced into the different printing establishments[3]."

TRANSLATION OF THE BIBLE ; ITS IMPORTANCE

Much misconception seems to exist as to the exact nature of the services rendered by Carey to Bengali literature by translating the Bible into that language. No doubt, here was the realisation of one of the highest ambitions of Carey as a missionary ; and in the history of Church Missions, it occupies a very high and well-deserved position. Carey has been called by enthusiastic admirers the Wyclif and the Tyndal, while Dr. Yates the Coverdale of the Bengali Bible[4],

1 *Memoir relative to the Translation of the Sacred Scriptures into the Languages of the East*, Serampore 1816, by Marshman. The Bible was translated through the efforts of the Śrīrāmpur Mission into 40 different languages and dialects. See also *Periodical Accounts relative to the Baptist Mss. Soc.* (Clipstone 1800-17 in 6 vols.) vol. i, pp. 292, 368, 417, 527: vol. ii, pp. 62, 132. See remarks on these oriental translations in William Brown, *History of Missions* (Edinburgh 1854), vol. ii, p. 71.

2 Pañchānan lived for only 3 or 4 years after this ; *Bengal Obituary*, Calcutta 1851, p. 338.

3 Marshman, *Hist. of Serampur Mission*, vol. i, p. 179.

4 Smith, *op. cit.* p. 186. But see Brown, *Hist. of Missions*, vol ii, p. 71 where Carey's version is impartially estimated to be now "given

Whatever may be the value of such comparisons, from the standpoint of Bengali literature it is, however, to say the least, ill-informed and misleading. The position which Wyclif's Tyndal's and Coverdale's versions respectively occupy in the history as well as the literature of England is not the same as that which Carey's or Yates' translations can ever aspire to attain[1]. There might be some point in comparing Carey's version to Wyclif's, for the latter cannot, it is well-known, compete as literature with that produced two centuries later in English, and consequently possesses nothing save an historical attraction. But Coverdale's claim rests on his supposed principal share in the merits of the early Tudor translations of the Bible. To compare these early English versions of the Bible with the Bengali ones of Carey and Yates would be to make a wrong estimate of both. As a piece of literature the Bengali version cannot be said to be a masterpiece in the sense in which the English versions are. That the English version, whether of 1535 or of 1611, is a monument of early English prose; that its peculiar style—"the swan-song" as happily put "of Middle English transferred from verse to prose"—has always been the admiration of best critics and writers from generation to generation; and that there is no better English anywhere than the English of the Bible; of these facts there can be no doubt. But to speak of Carey's and Yates' versions in similar terms would not only be incorrect but ludicrous. Here is the version of one of the most sublime passages of the Bible—the account of the creation at the beginning; but the reader will note that the translation is not only imperfect and crude, the grammar incorrect, the idiom faulty, the syntax crabbed and obscure, but also the whole thing looks like an absolutely foreign growth vainly attempted to be acclimatized in Bengali.

up as of no great value." See *Cal. Rev.* x, p. 134 ; *Cal. Christ. Observ.* vol. xvii. p. 557.

1 Or even Wenger's (1861) or Rouse's (1897) later revisions.

প্রথমে ঈশ্বর সৃজন করিলেন স্বর্গ ও পৃথিবী। পৃথিবী শূন্য ও অস্থিরাকার হইল এবং গভীরের উপরে অন্ধকার ও ঈশ্বরের আত্মা দোলায়মান হইলেন জলের উপর। পরে ঈশ্বর বলিলেন দীপ্তি হউক তাহাতে দীপ্তি হইল তখন ঈশ্বর সে দীপ্তি বিলক্ষণ দেখিলেন। তৎপরে ঈশ্বর দীপ্তি অন্ধকার বিভিন্ন করিলেন। ঈশ্বর ও দীপ্তির নাম রাখিলেন দিবস ও অন্ধকারের নাম রাত্রি। সন্ধ্যা ও প্রাতকাল হইলে হইল প্রথম দিবস।

এবং ঈশ্বর বলিলেন আকাশ হউক জলের মধ্যস্থলে ও সে জল এ জল প্রথক করুক। অতএব ঈশ্বর সৃজন করিলেন আকাশ ও প্রথক করিলেন আকাশের উপরের জল নিচের জল হইতে। তাহাতে সেই মত হইল। ঈশ্বর সে আকাশের নাম রাখিলেন স্বর্গ সন্ধ্যা ও প্রাতকাল হইলে হইল দ্বিতীয় দিবস।

এবং ঈশ্বর বলিলেন স্বর্গের নিচের জল একত্তর হউক এক স্থানে ও সুস্ক ভূমি প্রকাশ হউক। তাহাতে সেই মত হইল। পরে ঈশ্বর সে সুস্ক ভূমির নাম রাখিলেন পৃথিবী ও সে জলের একত্তরের নাম রাখিলেন সমুদ্র। ঈশ্বর ও তাহা দেখিলেন বিলক্ষণ। পরে ঈশ্বর বলিলেন পৃথিবী উৎপন্ন করুক অঙ্কুশ ও বীজ দায়িক তৃণ ও ফল বৃক্ষ যাহা ফল ফলিবে। আপনারানুযায়ি যাহার বীজ আপনার মধ্যে পৃথিবীর উপর। তাহাতে সেই মত হইল। এতএব পৃথীবী উৎপন্ন করিল অঙ্কুশ ও বীজ দায়িক তৃণ আপনারানুযায়ি ও ফলদায়িক বৃক্ষ যাহার বীজ আপনার মধ্যে আপনার প্রকারানুযায়ি। ঈশ্বর ও দেখিলেন তাহা বিলক্ষণ। সন্ধ্যা ও প্রাতকাল হইলে হইল তৃতীয় দিবস।

তখন ঈশ্বর বলিলেন দীপ্তি হউক স্বর্গের আকাশের মধ্যে দিবারাত্রি বিভিন্ন করিতে ও তাহা হউক চিহ্ন ও কাল ও দিবস ও বৎসর নিরূপণের কারণ। তাহারা ও দীপ্তি হউক স্বর্গের আকাশে উজ্জল করিতে পৃথীবীর উপর। তাহাতে সেই মত হইল। তারপরে ঈশ্বর নির্ম্মাণ করিলেন দুই বড় দীপ্তি বড়তর দীপ্তি দিবসের কর্তৃত্ব করিতে ক্ষুদ্রতর দীপ্তি রজনির কৃত্তিত্ব করিতে তিনি ও নির্ম্মাণ করিলেন তারাগণ। ঈশ্বর ও স্থাপন করিলেন তাহারদিগকে স্বর্গের আকাশে উজ্জল করিতে পৃথীবিতে ও কর্তৃত্ব করিতে

দিবারাত্রির উপর ও দীপ্তি অন্ধকার বিভিন্ন করিতে। ঈশ্বর ও দেখিলেন তাহা বিলক্ষণ। সন্ধ্যা ও প্রাতকাল হইলে হইল চতুর্থ দিবস।

তাহার পরে ঈশ্বর বলিলেন জল উদ্ভব করুক অপদ জন্তু ও পক্ষ উড়ুক পৃথীবির উপর স্বর্গের আকাশে। সেই মত ঈশ্বর নির্ম্মাণ করিলেন বড় কুম্ভীর ও সুশকাদি প্রতি জন্তু যাহা জলে গতি করে তাহারদের জাত্যানুযায়ি ও প্রতিপক্ষ তাহারদের জাত্যানুযায়ি। ঈশ্বর ও দেখিলেন তাহা বিলক্ষণ। ঈশ্বর ও আশীর্ব্বাদ দিলেন তাহারদিগকে কহিয়া বাড় ও বংশ বৃদ্ধ ও পূর্ণ্ণ হও সমুদ্রের জলে পক্ষ ও বংশ বৃদ্ধ হউক পৃথীবীর উপর। সন্ধ্যা ও প্রাতকাল হইলে হইল পঞ্চম দিবস। (ধর্ম্মপুস্তক। পৃঃ ১-৩)[1]

The Bengali style however in these versions, it will be seen, is not laboured but directed towards simplicity, and some attempt is made, in however groping fashion, to reproduce the poetry and magnificence of the Biblical style, so far as it was possible to do so in that early stage of Bengali prose.[2] Yet, as the following extract from Pharaoh's dream in the revised version of Yates will indicate, how immature

1 ধর্ম্মপুস্তক। তাহা ঈশ্বরের সমস্ত বাক্য। যাহা প্রকাশ করিয়াছেন মনুষ্যের ত্রাণ ও কার্য্যশোধনার্থে। তাহার প্রথম ভাগ যাহাতে চারি বর্গ, মোশার ব্যবস্থা, যিশরালের বিবরণ, গীতাদি, ভবিষ্যত বাক্য। মোশার ব্যবস্থা। তর্জ্জমা হইল এব্রিভাষা হইতে। শ্রীরামপুরে ছাপা হইল। ১৮০১। The English title-page is as follows: The Holy Bible, containing the Old Testament and the New: translated out of the original tongues. Serampore, Printed at the Mission Press, 1802. The title-page of vol. ii (New Testament) is as follows: ধর্ম্মপুস্তক তাহার অন্তভাগ। তাহা আমারদের প্রভু ও ত্রাণকর্ত্তা যেশু খ্রীষ্টের মঙ্গল সমাচার। তর্জ্জমা হইল গ্রীক ভাষা হইতে। শ্রীরামপুরে ছাপা হইল। ১৮০১।

2 No pains were spared, it seems, to make the version as accurate and natural as possible. Carey revised it four times before publication with Rām Basu, "the most accomplished Bengali scholar of the time", by his side. The Pundits judged of the style and syntax and he himself of the faithfulness of the translation. (E. Carey, *op. cit.* p. 308). In 1815 Carey took Yates as an associate with himself in these translations. "His special care" says W. H. Carey (*Orient. Christ. Biography*, vol. i, p. 319) "was bestowed upon the Bengali version."

and crude the style is and what presumption it is to compare it with the traditional excellence of the Biblical style![1]

একদিনে পূর্ব্বকালীয় মিসরদেশের ফিরৌণ্ রাজ এই স্বপ্ন দেখিল। সে নদীকূলে দাঁড়াইয়া থাকিলে নদী হইতে সাতটা হৃষ্টপুষ্ট সুন্দর গোরু উঠিয়া প্রান্তরে চরিতে লাগিল। পরে আর সাতটা কৃশ ও কুৎসিৎ গোরু নদী হইতে উঠিয়া নদীর তীরে ঐ গোরুদের নিকট দাঁড়াইল। পরে সেই কৃশ কুৎসিৎ গোরু ঐ সপ্ত হৃষ্টপুষ্ট সুন্দর গোরুকে গ্রাস করিল। তখন ফিরৌণের নিদ্রাভঙ্গ হইল। তাহার পরে ফিরৌণ নিদ্রিত হইলে দ্বিতীয় বার স্বপ্ন দেখিল। এক বোঁটাতে সাত স্থূলাকার উত্তম শীষ উঠিল। পরে পূর্ব্বীয় বায়ুতে শুষ্ক আর সাত ক্ষীণ শীষ উঠিল। এবং সেই সাত ক্ষীণ শীষ ঐ সাত স্থূলাকার পূর্ণ শীষ গ্রাস করিল। পরে ফিরৌণের নিদ্রাভঙ্গ হইলে তাহা স্বপ্নমাত্র হইল।

It has been further remarked with regard to these Bengali versions that while the ideas of the Bible elaborate the notions of the readers, the language of it accustoms them to the disuse of the vulgar *patois*. All the resources of the language, grammatical and lexicographical, are called out to indicate (1) new and foreign and (2) noble ideas.[2] Hence, it is argued, the importance of the translated Bible in Bengali

1 Of course, this is a great improvement upon the original version of 1802 which runs as follows:—

দুই বৎসর পূর্ণ হইলে এইমত হইল ফারোঙা স্বপ্ন দেখিল দেখ সে ডাণ্ডাইয়াছে নদীর কিনারায় দেখ নদী হইতে উঠিল সুন্দর হিষ্টপুষ্ট সাতটা গাভী ও চরিতে লাগিল ধারের উপর দেখ তাহার পরে আর সাতটা গাভী উঠিল নদী হইতে বড় কুচ্ছিত ও কৃষা পরে নদিতীরে ডাণ্ডাইল আর সকল গাভীর কাছে অতঃপর কুচ্ছিত কৃষা গাভীরা খাইয়া ফেলাইল সে সাতটা সুন্দর হৃষ্টপুষ্ট গাভীরদিগকে। তখন ফারোঙার চৈতন্য হইল। পরে সে পুনর্ব্বার নিদ্রিত হইয়া স্বপ্ন দেখিল দেখ সাত শিষ শস্য উৎপন্ন হইল একগাছ তৃণের উপর তাজা ও বিলক্ষণ তারপর দেখ পুবিয়া বায়ুতে শুষ্ক করা সাতটা পাতলা শিষ উৎপন্ন হইল পরে সে সাতটা শিষ খাইয়া ফেলিল সে সাতটা তাজা শিষেরদিগকে তখন ফারোঙা জাগ্রত হইল। (ধর্ম্মপুস্তক, প্রথমভাগ, পৃঃ ৪১).

2 *Cal. Rev.* vol. xiii. 1850. Art. "Early Bengali Literature and Newspaper." p. 139.

literature. The remark, however, would have been perfectly true and appropriate had the condition of things been in India what it had been in Europe. The Bible is the one book in the European countries which is a universal favourite, and its ideas and language have through many centuries become almost a part of the ideas and language of the people at large. To this is partly due the enormous influence of the sacred book on the languages and literatures of Europe. The Bengali Bible, however, has failed to exercise any such influence. Again, it is true that in all translations the resources of the language are drawn out to the utmost and that translation is the best exercising ground for an infant literature, yet even as a piece of translation, the Bengali Bible cannot in any sense be regarded as a triumph of the translator's art, and the very strain in expressing strange and alien ideas with a limited command over the inherent powers of the language, makes the style crabbed, stilted and unnatural. The missionary writings in Bengali have a sort of traditional repute for crabbed syntax and false juxtaposition of words; here surely the tradition for once is not misleading. Indeed, in spite of all that can be said in favour of the versions, no critic, however alive to their importance as the earliest specimens of simple and homely prose, can ever claim anything like literary competency for them marked that they are throughout by earliness and immaturity. Carey's claim to importance as a contributor to Bengali literature does not rest so much upon his Bible-translations and some tracts on Christianity, but on the works which he produced in another sphere of usefulness but on which he himself seems to have laid less emphasis, although they show him in a better light as a writer of Bengali.

CAREY REMOVES TO FORT WILLIAM COLLEGE

This sphere of usefulness was first opened to Carey by his appointment as a teacher of Bengali in Lord Wellesley's

newly established Fort William College. It is to be noted, however, that it was the publication of the Bible-translation and his reputation as the foremost European scholar of Bengali that had secured the appointment which placed him in a position, philological and financial, to further the cause of Bengali writing. It was more to his connexion with the Fort William College and his growing influence as a writer and scholar in Bengali than to his position as a preacher of the Gospels that we owe every thing that he did for enriching Bengali literature.

CHAPTER V

WILLIAM CAREY AND FORT WILLIAM COLLEGE

FORT WILLIAM COLLEGE IN THE HISTORY OF BENGALI PROSE

Among the institutions which in various ways gave an impetus to Bengali literature, we must give a prominent place to the Fort William College. Since the practical disappearance of Bengali literature after Bhāratchandra's death, its first public emergence is to be traced in the prose publications of this College, which, although no literature by themselves, certainly heralded the more mature productions of later days. The importance of Fort William College in the history of modern Bengali prose is not due to the supreme excellence of its publication (for its publications were not in any way first-rate) but to the fact that by its employment of the Press, by pecuniary and other encouragement, by affording a central place for the needed contact of mind to mind, it gave such an impetus to Bengali learning, as was never given by any other institution since the establishment of British rule. It is true that the books published under its patronage and generally for the use of its students were not more numerous or more substantial than those of the famous School Book Society of later times; but it must be admitted that the list presents a long series of important compositions in the varnacular and classical languages of the East on a variety of subjects, and comprehends many works which, though written expressly for young civilian students, were at one time widely celebrated in this country, and which have not yet lost all their value and interest. But this was not all. The College was the seminary of western learning in an eastern dress; it helped to diffuse western ideas through the medium of the vernacular. At the same time, orientalism was its principal feature, and it turned the attention of students and scholars to the cultivation of oriental languages, both classical and

vernacular. "The establishment of the College of Fort William" said Sir George Barlow at the first Disputation of the College held as early as 1802 "has already excited a general attention to oriental language, literature and knowledge."[1] We can realise what this means when we bear in mind the general neglect and oblivion to which Bengali literature and Bengali education had hitherto been consigned. The Honourable Visitor of 1815 in remarking on the encouragement held out by the College for the study of the leading oriental languages observed that previously to the foundation of the College the language of Bengal was generally neglected and unknown".[2] The best scholars and the greatest intellects of the country met here in friendly intercourse; and we shall see how an attractive personality like Carey's drew around it a band of enthusiastic writers, bent upon removing the poverty of their vernacular. At the invitation and inducement of such scholars, literary works were undertaken by the enlightened Bengali community as well as by the Munshis and Pundits of the College, who would possibly have produced nothing but for the stimulus thus given to their literary zeal and the encouragement yielded by the liberality of government which would have never otherwise been so readily called into being.[3]

THE VALUE OF ITS PUBLICATIONS

The movement for undertaking literary and scientific works in Bengali prose and for translation into that language,

1 Roebuck, *Annals of the College of Fort William*, Calcutta 1819, p. 17 ; *The College of Fort William*, Calcutta 1805, ed. by Claudius Buchanan, Vice-Provost and Professor of the College (see H. Pearson's *Memoirs of Claudius Buchanan*, 2 vols. 1819, vol. i, p. 202 footnote) containing all the official papers and literary proceedings of the College, p. 58 at p. 62 ; See also Seton-Karr, *Selections from Cal. Gazette* (1864-69 in 5 vols.), vol. iii, pp. 296-99: etc.

2 Roebuck *op. cit.* p. 468.

3 This was a pet scheme of Wellesley's: so the liberality of Government was magnificent.

which till 1850 had been so conspicuous an activity in the literary history of Bengal, had its beginning in the publications the College of Fort William[1] and in the zeal of its scholars, aided no doubt by the fact that exigencies of education and spread of liberal ideas naturally brought on a multiplication of text-books and books of general interest. It is true, speaking generally, that the productions of these devoted scholars, consisting, as they do, mostly of school-books and translations, are far from being invulnerable in pcint of literary merit; yet to them belongs the credit of breaking fresh ground and creating the all-important Bengali prose-of-all-work. Not that we had no Bengali prose before this, but it was hardly in current use and not so developed as to be the medium of everyday thoughts of the nation.[2] No one can claim for this early prose the finish and all-expressiveness of latter-day prose, but it cannot be denied that here we have, if not art, at least craftsmanship; if precisely no work of genius, at least the hint and intimation of such close at hand.

THE FORT WILLIAM COLLEGE: ITS FOUNDATION (1800) AND OBJECT

The College of Fort William which was actually in operation, from May 4, 1800[3] was formally established on August 18 by a Minute in Council in which the Governor-General detailed at length the reasons for starting such an institution[4].

1 The popular opinion, aided, no doubt, by the extreme scarcity of these publications in the present day as well as by ignorant or careless criticism, often deriving its informations second-hand, that these publications were seldom or never read, is not borne out by contemporary allusions referring to these works and their extensive sale, running them through numerous editions within half a century. Most of these publications afforded an endless quarry of fables and stories, always interesting to an oriental reader.

2 See App. I.

3 The First Term of the College commenced from February 6, 1801.

4 *Minutes in Council at the Fort William* by His Excellency the Most Hon'ble Marquis of Wellesley, containing his reasons for the

No sooner did Lord Wellesley find himself freed from the uncongenial bonds of war in the South than he devoted himself to various measures of internal administration with an ardour seldom equalled except perhaps by Lord Bentinck whom he so closely resembled. The Company's Civil Service, although it produced a few men of first-rate ability, had sunk into the lowest depths of vice and ignorance. The Service had its origin in a mercantile staff, well-versed in the mysteries of the counting-house ; and its training, since the Factory had grown into an Empire, had not been sufficient for the more important duties which now devolved upon it. The system which Burke had reprobated fifteen years ago was still unchanged, and lads of fifteen to eighteen were being sent out to India before their education could be finished, with no opportunity or inducement on their arrival to complete it. At the close of three or four years' residence, the young Civilians, endowed with an affluent income and unchecked authority, had not only lost the fruits of their European studies and gained no useful knowledge of Asiatic literature or business but were absolutely abandoned to pursue their own inclination without guidance or control. Of the languages and manners of the people whose affairs they were called upon to administer, they were not required to know even the rudiments[1]. The Minute denounced in the strongest terms "the absolute insufficiency of this class of young men to execute the duties of any station whatsoever in the Civil Service of the Company beyond the menial, laborious and unprofitable duty of a mere copying clerk". It

establishment of a College in Bengal, dated August 18, 1800 (see Roebuck, *op. cit.* p. vi and Buchanan, *op. cit.* p. 8-9.

1 It appears from the proceedings of the Governor-General in Council dated as far back as Sep. 10, 1790 that with a view to the acquisition of the Indian languages by the Company's writers, encouragement was afforded by offering them allowance and other facilities (Seton-Karr, *Selections from Cal. Gazette*, ii. 213-14), but it was never enjoined upon them as a matter of duty or necessity.

became evident that there could be no substantive improvement without providing a succession of men sufficiently qualified to conduct it. "The Civil Servants of the English East India Company" says the Minute[1] "can no longer be considered as the agents of a commercial concern ; they are in fact the ministers and officers of a powerful sovereign: they must now be viewed in that capacity with a reference, not to their nominal, but to their real occupation.......Their studies, the discipline of their education, their habits of life, their manners and morals should therefore be so ordered and regulated as to establish......a sufficient correspondence between their qualifications and their duties".[2] The minute then declares that "A College is hereby founded at Fort William in Bengal for the better instruction of the Junior Civil Servants of the Company." The institution was projected on a scale of magnificence which marked all the plans of Lord Wellesley, but under the pressure of the authorities at home, who were deadly opposed to the institution and without whose sanction and acquiescence it had been set up, the College was continued on a reduced scale[3].

ITS RANGE OF STUDIES AND ITS ORIENTALISM

The range of studies marked out for the students in the College was very extensive and one of its most striking features was its orientalism. The curriculum, subsequently

1 Roebuck, *op. cit.* p. iv ; Buchanan, *op. cit.* pp. 5-6.

2 See Seton-Karr. *op. cit.* vol. iii, pp. 22-23. Before the formal establishment of the College, Dr. Gilchrist, an eminent Hindustani scholar, was appointed provisionally by Lord Wellesley to find out if an experiment of lecturing to young Civilians could be made successful. It succeeded splendidy, as appears from the Report of the Committee appointed to ascertain the progress made in Gilchrist's class (Roebuck, *op. cit.* pp. 1-14 ; Seton-Karr, *op. cit.* vol. iii, pp. 58-61). After this the scheme of Fort William College was set on foot.

3 The College continued till 1854 ; but since the foundation of School Book Society and Hindu College in 1817, its importance was overshadowed and diminished.

modified, was intended to include in its grand scale "Arabic, Persian, Sanskrit, Hindustani, Bengali, Telugu, Mahratti, Tamil, Kanara", besides "Laws and Regulations, Political Economy, Modern Languages, Greek, Latin, English Classics, General History ancient and modern, History of India, Natural History, Botany, Chemistry and Astronomy[1]"! The College was patronised by the Governor-General himself, his colleagues, and the Judges of the Supreme Court ; for it was considered to be one of the most important institutions of the State, and the senior members of Government were required in virtue of their office to take a share in its management. Public disputations in oriental languages were held annually in the grand edifice which Wellesley had erected, in an august assembly, composed of men of high rank.

PUBLIC DISPUTATIONS AND THESES BY ITS STUDENTS

It would interest Bengali readers to learn that debates were held in Bengali, and the subject at the First Public Disputation held in February 6, 1802 was "Whether the Asiatics are capable of as high degree of civilisation as Europeans". The theses read by the students were published,[2] and they afford us some of the earliest specimens of sustained prose-writing attempted by Europeans. We give below the theses pronounced by James Hunter, at a disputation in Bengali in the Second Public Disputation held on March 29, 1803, although we have, as we shall see, better specimens of prose-writing even before this date. This would, however, serve as the *average* specimen of 'European prose' of the time. There are some quaint turns of phrases, a few inevitable mistakes of idiom and syntax and errors of orthography,

1 Roebuck, *op. cit.* p. xvii.

2 Reports of the annual Disputations till 1819 will be found in detail in Roebuck, *op. cit.* Also in Buchanan, *op. cit.* till 1805 ; and also see Seton-Karr, *op. cit.* p. 296 ; also in *Primitiae Orientales* containing these etc. by Students of Fort William College, Calcutta 1803 in 2 vols.

and the style is a little too crude and sanskritised; yet if we compare with it the contemporary prose of *Pratāpāditya Charitra* (1801) and *Lipimālā* (1802), this specimen will hardly be at a disadvantage with them in many respects.[1] The scarcity of the publications which contain these theses will be a sufficient excuse for the length of the quotation. The subject was "The Distribution of Hindus into Castes retard their progress in improvement".

THESIS AT THE SECOND DISPUTATION REPRODUCED, AS THE AVERAGE SPECIMEN OF THE EUROPE-ANISED BENGALI PROSE OF THE TIME

হিন্দুলোকেরা ভিন্ন ভিন্ন জাতি এই প্রযুক্ত তাহারদের বিদ্যাবৃদ্ধির হানি হয়।

মানুষেরদের নীতিজ্ঞতা এবং শ্বচ্ছতাপ্রাপ্তিসম্বাদিভ্রমণস্থায় যখন আমরা দেখি তখন আমরা বিস্ময়াপন্ন হই সকলে বুঝে যে ভিন্ন দেশীয় লোকেরদের ভিন্ন ভিন্ন রীতির এই কারণ যে আপন আপন স্বভাব এবং গ্রীষ্ম শীতের গুণ বহুস্ত দেশীয় ব্যবস্থাপকেরা ব্যবস্থাকরণ কালে এই দুই কারণ প্রধান করিয়া মানিয়াছেন সর্ব্বদেশে পৃথক পৃথক ব্যবহার সংসারের চলন নিমিত্ত অবশ্য মান্য হইয়াছে।

কোন দেশীয় লোকেরা এ পথ মেলা রাক্ষিয়াছে যাহাতে কোন বুদ্ধিমান লোক যদি অতি নীচ হয় তথাচ অতি উত্তম ক্রিয়া করিতে পারে এবং মহা

1 Some of the students of the College published notable works. In 1808 Henry Sarjent, who was a distinguished student of Bengali in the College (See Roebuck, *op. cit.* pp. 178-180, 218-221) translated the first four books of the Æneid or Iliad (the first book, according to Long's *Catalogue*, came out in 1805). Monckton, another student, translated Shakespeare's *Tempest* (*Cal. Rev.* 1850, Art. Beng. Lit.). Long, however, followed by Dinesh Chandra Sen (*op. cit.* p. 876), mistakes the name of Henry Sarjent for "J. Serjeant." From Roebuck *op. cit.* it appears that there was no student in the College bearing the name of "J. Serjeant," and no such person, it would seem from E. Dodwell and J. S. Miles (*Bengal Civil Servants*, London 1839), ever entered the Civil Service.

সম্ভ্রম পায় এবং অন্য দেশীয় লোকেরা ভিন্ন ভিন্ন জাতির মধ্যে অলঙ্ঘনীয় প্রাচীরের ন্যায় ভিন্ন ভিন্ন ব্যবহার ব্যবধান করিয়াছে এবং এমন অনন্যথা ভাবি ব্যবহারে নিয়ম করিয়া বিদ্যাবৃদ্ধির ইচ্ছা এবং উত্তম হওনের চেষ্টা স্থকিত করিয়াছে প্রকৃত হিন্দুস্থানের লোকেরদের এই মত তাহারদের ব্যবস্থায় মহানীতি এবং অতিশয় বিদ্যা প্রকাশিত হয় কিন্তু তবে কি ভাল বুঝিয়া পৃথক পৃথক জাতির নিয়ম করিল ইহার কারণ বুঝা কঠিন বরং ইহাতে এইমত বুঝা যায় যে অহংকৃত অজ্ঞানী অসন্ধানী লোকেরা অন্যের মহত্ত্ব লোপ করিয়া আপন আপন মহত্ত্বের বাহুল্য করিয়াছে এবং বিদ্যা ও বুদ্ধি কর্তৃক আরোপিত ভক্তি ও মুর্খতার যে পরাজয় সে এই ধন ও সমাদর পাওনের নিমিত্ত এবং লোকেরদের মনের শান্তা হওনের নিমিত্ত এবং প্রকারান্তরে রাজ্যশাসন করিতে না পারিয়া এই প্রকারে লোকেরদের শাসন নিমিত্ত অজ্ঞানী যাজকতা জাতিবিভেদ সৃষ্টি করিল।

ব্রাহ্মণেরা বলে সৃষ্ট্যারম্ভে ঈশ্বর পৃথক পৃথক চারিবর্ণ সৃজন করিলেন ব্রাহ্মণ ক্ষত্রিয় বৈশ্য শূদ্র ইহারদিগের পৃথক পৃথক ধর্ম্মাচার দ্বিজধর্ম্ম এই সুন্ধাচার যজন যাজন অধ্যয়ন অধ্যাপন দান প্রতিগ্রহণ ইত্যাদি ক্ষত্রিয়াচার রাজধর্ম্ম ব্রাহ্মণরক্ষণ ধনুর্বিদ্যাঅভ্যাসন শিষ্ট পালন দুষ্টদমন রাজ্যশাসন প্রজাপালন ন্যায্য করগ্রহণ বৈশ্যবৃত্তি কৃষিকর্ম্ম এবং বাণিজ্য শূদ্রের ধর্ম্ম ব্রাহ্মণ সেবামাত্র।

দেখ ব্রাহ্মণ হইয়া যদি নীচবৃত্তি করে তবে তাহার নীচত্ব প্রাপ্তি হয় এবং অন্যোন্য যাবৎ জাতি সমস্তই এইমত ইহাতে সমস্ত লোক আপন আপন জাতি রক্ষণার্থে স্বধর্ম্মনিষ্ঠ থাকে তাহার অন্যথা করে না; ইহাতে জানা যায় যদি কোন লোক আপন জাতির বিশেষ কর্ম্ম জন্মাবধি না করে তবে তাহার সুখ্যাতির হানি হয় কাহার কিছু ক্ষতি হয় কাহার কিছুই থাকেনা সুখ্যাতি গেলে কোন বিদ্যাতে ইচ্ছা হয় না কেন না সুখ্যাতি ও জাতি পুনর্ব্বার হইতে পারে না এমন লোকও পূর্ব্ব বন্ধু দেখিলে মনঃপীড়া পায় এবং সেই লোকও আপন পূর্ব্ব বন্ধু আপন সমান করিতে সক্ত্যনুক্রমে চেষ্টা পায়।

হিন্দুরদের পৃথক পৃথক হওয়া সকল বিদ্যা হওনের প্রতিবন্ধক পুত্র যদি পৈতৃক বিদ্যা ভিন্নান্য বিদ্যাভ্যাসন ইচ্ছুক হয় এবং যোগ্য বুঝা যায় সে পুত্র

আপন জাতি রক্ষা প্রযুক্ত স্বীয় অভিলষিত বিদ্যাতে প্রবর্ত্ত হইতে পারে না এই তাহার বুদ্ধি স্ফূর্ত্তির বাধক হয় তাহার স্থল এই যদি কোন শূদ্র বেদবেদাঙ্গ পাঠ করে তবে হিন্দুরদের শাস্ত্রমত এই দণ্ড কর্ত্তব্য অভ্যাসে জিহ্বাচ্ছেদন করিবেক ইচ্ছাপূর্ব্বক তাহা শ্রবণ করিলে সে শূদ্রের কর্ণেতে তপ্ত সীসা প্রদান করিবেক আর শূদ্র হইয়া যদি বেদের অর্থ মনেতে ধারণ করে তবে তাহাকে বধ করিতে হয়।

অন্য শাস্ত্র যদি ভাষাতে তর্জ্জমা করে তবে সংস্কৃত শাস্ত্রের গৌরব হানি প্রযুক্ত তাহার অখ্যাতি হয় যেমন মহাভারতের তর্জ্জমা ভাষাতে কাশীদাস নামে এক শূদ্র করিয়াছিল সেই দোষেতে ব্রাহ্মণেরা তাহাকে শাপ দিয়াছিল সেই ভয়েতে অন্য কেহ এখন সে কর্ম্ম করে না।

হিন্দুলোকেরা যদিও আপন শাস্ত্রের নিশ্চয়তে থাকে তবে অন্য দেশের বিদ্যা ও ব্যবহার যদি ভালও হয় তবুও তাহা গ্রহণ করিতে পারে না যদি অন্য দেশের বিদ্যা ও ব্যবহার দেখে কিম্বা শুনে তথাপি তুচ্ছ করিয়া আদর করে না এতএব অন্য লোকের ব্যবহারেতে তাহারদের জ্ঞানলাভ হইতে পারিবে না।

অন্য দেশের গমন ও অন্য দেশের ব্যবহার দর্শন ও অন্যদেশের বিদ্যাভ্যাসেতে লোকের বুদ্ধির বৃদ্ধি হয় হিন্দুলোকেরদের শাস্ত্রের মতে পশ্চিমে আটক নদী পার হইলে জাতি যায় উত্তরে ভোটান্তর এবং ম্লেচ্ছদেশেও সেই মত এবং ব্রহ্মপুত্র পার হইলে পূর্ব্বধর্ম্ম নষ্ট হয়। দক্ষিণে সমুদ্রপথে জাহাজে থাকিয়া ভোজন পান করিলে জাতি যায়। হিন্দু শাস্ত্রের মতে গোখাদকের সংসর্গ করিলেও দোষ হিন্দুছাড়া যত লোক সকলেই গোমাংস খায় অতএব হিন্দুরা তাহারদের সহিত সহবাস করিতে পারে না এবং যেমত নির্জ্জন উপদ্বীপে কোন ব্যক্তি একাকী থাকে সেইমত এই একাসাড়িয়া রীতিতে তাহারদের বুদ্ধি প্রতিভা জড়িভূতা হইয়াছে এবং তাহারদের উদ্যোগ শিথিল হইয়া অবিনীততা ও স্তব্ধতা হইয়াছে; এই ইয়ুরোপীয়েরদের মধ্যে দস্যু প্রভৃতি অধম লোক হইতেও অধম; কেননা ইহারা স্বস্থান ত্যাগ করিয়া সুক্রিয়ান্বিত হইলে তাহারদের সুখ্যাতি পুনর্ব্বার হইতে পারে কিন্তু ইহারদের কখন ভাল হইতে পারে না হিন্দুরা শাস্ত্রব্যবস্থা

কিম্বা মান্য লোকেরা যাদৃচ্ছিক আজ্ঞা লঙ্ঘন করিলেই অপার দুঃখসাগরে পড়ে।

জাতিরূপ হাপা [illegible] বুদ্ধিবৃদ্ধির হানি করে না বরং ভিন্নদেশে পরস্পর গমনাগমনের বাধক হয় পরোপকারক জ্ঞান সঞ্চয়েতে কৃপণতা প্রকাশ হয়। অন্য দেশীয় লোকেরদে[illegible]র্গ হইতে উৎপাদ্য যে জ্ঞান ও বিদ্যারূপ উন্নই জাতিকর্তৃক বন্ধ হইয়াছে তাহাতে তাহারা অন্যদেশীয় বিশেষ বিবরণ ও ভূগোলবিদ্যা ও মহানাবিক বিদ্যা ও অস্ত্রচিকিৎসা বিদ্যা ও প্রাণিবিদ্যা ও বৃক্ষাদিবিদ্যা ও জ্যোতিষবিদ্যা ও যুদ্ধবিদ্যা ইত্যাদি আর আর উত্তম বিদ্যাতে অজ্ঞ হইয়াছে বিদ্বান লোক স্বদেশে উৎপন্ন না হইলে বিদ্যাবৃদ্ধি হইতে পারে না নাবিকবিদ্যাদ্বারা আমারদের প্রায় সকল ভাল হইল এবং যে নূতন বিদ্যাতে লোকেরদের উত্তর উত্তর সুখবৃদ্ধি হয় তাহা প্রকাশ করণের দ্বারা সেই বিদ্যা লোকেরদের মনের তেজকারি হয় কিন্তু হিন্দুরা সমুদ্রগমন করে না অতএব এ সকল হইতে দূর থাকে।

আমি জানি যে তোমরা ইহার অন্যথা বলিবা যেখানে ইয়ুরোপীয়েরা থাকে হিন্দুলোকেবা তাহারদের সেবা করে এবং তাহারদের সহিত ব্যবহার করে ইহাতে হিন্দুলোকেরদের জাতি যায় না ও অখ্যাতি হয় না ইহা আমি স্বীকার করি না কেননা, যদি কোন সত্যবাদী হিন্দুলোককে জিজ্ঞাসা করা যায় তবে সে অবশ্য বলিবেক যে এমন ব্যবহার করে তাহার জাতি নাই কেননা এই প্রকার অনেক লোক এবং অনেক লোক ধনবান হওনেতে কেহ কাহাকে কিছু বলে না। এ সকল বিচার করিয়া আমি বুঝি যে ভিন্ন ভিন্ন জাতি প্রযুক্ত বিদ্যাবৃদ্ধির হানি হয়।[1]

CAREY AS PROFESSOR BENGALI ; HIS INFLUENCE

Carey was appointed teacher of Bengali and Sanskrit languages[2] in April 1801. On January 1, 1807 he was raised

1 *Primitiae Orientales*, Calcutta (in 2 vols.) 1803, vol. ii, pp. 67-74, containing theses in the Oriental languages pronounced at the Public Disputations by the Students of the College of Fort William, with translations.

2 Afterwards of the Mahrathi language.

to the status of a Professor[1] and he continued till 1831 to be the most notable figure in the College of Fort William. This appointment threw Calcutta open to him as a field of work, and for the next thirty years from 1801 he spent as much of his time in the metropolis as at Śrīrāmpur. He found the appointment bringing in its train responsible duties but it afforded him an early opportunity not only to cultivate "the beautiful language of Bengal" but also to enrich its literature by his own labours as well as by the labours of others whom he induced to work in the same field. He himself not only wrote a grammar, compiled a dictionary and composed text-books, but he was at the same time the centre of the learned Bengalis, whom by his zeal he attracted around him as Pundits and Munsis, as inquirers and visitors. The impetus which he gave to Bengali learning is to be measured not merely by his productions or by his educational labours at this institution or at Śrīrāmpur but also by the influence he had exerted and the example he had set before an admiring public who soon took up his work in earnestness. He had gathered around him a number of scholars who were at first his teachers but whom he had succeeded in employing in extensive literary work. Of the fifteen Munsis[2] who taught Bengali in the College, the chief was his own Pundit, Mṛtyuñjay, who wrote some of the most learned and elaborate treatises of the time. He induced three other Pundits of the College, Rām Basu, Rājīb-lochan and Chaṇḍīcharaṇ, to undertake the composition of vernacular works, and he always befriended those who took any interest in the vernacular literature. It was at his suggestion and encouragement that Mohanprasād Ṭhākur, assistant Librarian to the College of Fort William, compiled his English-Bengali Vocabulary[3]

1 Roebuck, *op. cit.* Appendix iv, p. 52 at p. 54 ; Buchanan, *op. cit.* p. 236 at p. 237.

2 Buchanan, *op. cit.* p. 239.

3 *A Vocabulary Bengalee and English* for the use of students, arranged in alphabetical order under different subjects, by Mohan

(1810) which he dedicated to Dr. Carey. It is needless to multiply example of works which owed their origin to his suggestion and influence; but these will go to show how attractive his personality and how extensive his influence had been among his collaborators in the field. "When the appointment was made" he writes on June 15, 1801 "I saw that I had a very important charge committed to me and no books or helps of any kind to assist me. I therefore set about compiling a grammar, which is now half printed. I got Ram Ram Basu to compose a history of one of their kings, the first prose book ever written in the Bengalee Language, which we are also printing. Our Pundit[1] has also nearly translated the Sungskrit fables which we are also going to publish. These, with Mr. Forster's *Vocabulary*, will prepare the way to reading their poetical books ; so that I hope this difficulty will be gotten through."[2] Thus, Carey's College-room became the centre of incessant literary work as his Śrīrāmpur study had been of Bible-translation. We can imagine the indefatigable scholar in his chamber sitting with his Munsi for three or four hours daily mastering the language in all its complications, with a longing to educate the people, writing and translating hour by hour into Bengali tongue the books which he thought useful for that purpose and which contain the first systematic pieces of spirited Bengali prose.

THE ORIENTALISM OF THE COLLEGE; ITS EFFECT

Thus, although the College of Fort William was founded to fulfil a political mission, its usefulness and its importance

Prasād Thākur (1810) ; 2nd Ed. 1815 ; 3rd Edition 1852. Also compiled a Vocabulary Ooriya and English. Mohan Prasād was appointed Librarian to the College in October, 1807 (Roebuck, *op. cit.* App. III, p. 51) ; so he could not have compiled this work at the suggestion of Carey in 1805, as in Long's catalogue. See also Preface to Haughton's *Dictionary*.

1 Mṛtyuñjay.

2 E. Carey, *op. cit.* pp. 450-454 ; Smith, *op. cit.* p. 164.

never ended there. The impetus which it gave, as a centre of learning and culture, to the cause of vernacular language and literature, gives it a prominent place in the literary history of the time. No doubt, its greatest achievement in the history of intellectual progress in this country consists in its revival of the ancient culture of the land, with its all-comprehensive orientalism daring far beyond the intrepid dreams of scholars like Sir William Jones, Wilkins, and Colebrooke. But this orientalism embraced a great deal more than a mere revival of classical learning. Attention hitherto had never been turned to vernacular learning in this country, which was in a sadly neglected state at the beginning of the century. The College of Fort William, by its encouragement of the vernacular, first brought it into public notice and fostered and nourished it.

LIST OF ITS PUBLICATIONS

The list of its publications between 1800 and 1825 comprises, besides 31 works in Hindustani, 24 in Sanskrit, 20 in Arabic and 21 in Persian. The following are the principal works in Bengali[1] chronologically arranged.

1801 *Pratāpāditya Charitra* by Rām Rām Basu.
A Grammar of the Bengalee Language by W. Carey.
Kathopakathan[2] by William Carey.

1 This list is based on the lists given in Roebuck, *op. cit.* App. II, p. 29 (A Catalogue of all the Oriental works published under the patronage of the College of Fort William since its Institution in 1800 up to August 15, 1818); in Buchanan, *op. cit.* (List of books printed and published by the Fort William College before 1805) pp. 219-236; in *Primitiae Orientales* (vols. ii-iii, p. xlvi); and in the enumeration in Long's *Catalogue* which, however, is not always reliable. In all these cases where (with the one or two exceptions mentioned) we have been able to avail ourselves of the original editions, we have compared and verified the dates here given. Particulars or details about these works will be found in their proper places below, where each of them has been reviewed in its turn.

2 It seems to have been published a month later than *Pratāpāditya Charitra.*

1802 *Hitopadeś* translated by Goloknāth Śarmā (not connected with Fort William College).
Lipimālā[1] by Rām Rām Basu.
Batriś Siṁhāsan translated by Mṛtyuñjay Bidyālaṅkār.

1803 *Æsop's Fables* translated[2] into Bengali, under the direction and superintendence of Dr. J. Gilchrist, by Tāriṇīcharaṇ Mitra.

1805 *Totā Itihās* translated from Persian by Chaṇḍīcharaṇ Munsi.
Mahārāj Kṛṣṇachandra Rāyasya Charitram by Rājīb Lochan Mukhopādhyāy.

1808 *Rājābalī* by Mṛtyuñjay Bidyālaṅkār.
Hitopadeś by Mṛtyuñjay Bidyālaṅkār.
Hitopadeś[3] by Rāmkiśor Tarka-cuḍāmaṇi.

1810 *Vocabulary Bengalee and English* by Mohan Prasād Ṭhākur.

1812 *Itihās-mālā*[4] by William Carey.

1813 *Prabodh-chandrikā*[5] by Mṛtyuñjay Bidyālaṅkār.

1815 *Puruṣ-parīkṣā* translated by Haraprasād Rāy.

1815-1825 *A Dictionary of the Bengalee Language*, by William Carey. Vol. I. (The last volume was published in 1825).

1 In Buchanan *op. cit.* and *Primitiae Orientales* no name of the author is given, but he is simply described as a "learned native in the College."

2 This work is also mentioned by Long but not in connexion with the publication of the Fort William College.

3 Mentioned and dated by Roebuck. In the list of Pundits in the College in 1818, Roebuck mentions Rāmkiśor Tarka-chūḍamaṇi (appointed November 1805) in the Bengali Department.

4 Doubtful whether a publication of the College, not officially recorded to be such.

5 Published in 1833, long after the death of the author, with a preface by J. Marshman. Hence not mentioned by Roebuck: but known conclusively to be a publication for the use of the College from the testimony of Carey, Marshman and others.

Barring a few independent works here and there these were all the best publications and the chief writers in Bengali between 1800 and 1825.[1]

CAREY'S WORKS IN BENGALI

Even if we leave aside publications which are indirectly due to his instigation or encouragement, it will be seen that Carey's share in the work was not inconsiderable. Besides the translation of the Bible and numerous Christian tracts, Carey's works in Bengali consist chiefly of the following books:

(1) *A Grammar of the Bengalee Language.* Printed at the Mission Press. Serampore 1801. (2nd Edition[2] with alterations 1805; 3rd Ed. 1815; 4th Ed. 1818; 5th Ed. 1843).

(2) *Kathopakathan*, or *Colloquies* or *Dialogues intended to facilitate the acquiring of the Bengalee Language.* Printed at the Mission Press. Serampore August, 1801 (2nd Ed., 1806; 3rd Ed. 1818). In the 3rd. and 4th ed. it became combined

1 In Buchanan *op. cit.* there is a list of books printed during 1803 or in course of publication during the year 1804, at p. 238. In it we find mentioned a work, of which, however, there is no record in Roebuck or anywhere else, viz. Translation of the Bhagavadgītā from Sanskrit into Bengali by Chaṇḍī Charaṇ Munsi. It is not known whether it ever saw the light. In *Primit. Orient.* vol. ii p. l-li, we find the entry of another publication, long supposed to be a missionary publication only and not mentioned in the official records whether of Buchanan or of Roebuck, viz. The Old and the New Testament, translated into the Bengali Language, in 2 vols. It seems to be a reprint of the Śrīrāmpur edition, or even the identical publication, transferred to the list of publications of the Fort William College.

2 The date of the 2nd Edition is given as 'before 1803' in Buchanan, *op. cit.* p. 222 ; also Home Mis. No. 559, p. 168, in the list of works published before April 4, 1803 ; E. Carey, *op. cit.* p. 474. But Grierson, *Linguistic Survey*, vol. v. (1903) pt. i, p. 24 says that the 2nd edition was published in 1805 ; and Wilson (*Life and Labours of Carey*) corroborates it. In the tenth *Memoir* of the Śrīrāmpur mission, the date of the 2nd Ed. is given as 1805. The title-page of the 2nd ed. actually bears the date 1805.

with the Bengali Grammar. The title varies slightly in different editions.

(3) *Itihās-mālā* or a collection of stories in the Bengalee language collected from various sources. Serampore, Printed at the Mission Press. 1812.

(4) *A Dictionary of the Bengalee Language*, in which words are traced to their origin and their meanings are given, in 2 vols. Vol. I, 1815 (Vol. II, 1825). Vol I reprinted in 1818. The second volume is in 2 parts. All Bengali-English. Printed at the Mission Press, Serampore.[1]

CAREY'S BENGALI GRAMMAR

Carey's enthusiasm for Bengali and his patient scholarship are nowhere displayed better than in his industrious compilation of the Bengali Grammar and the Bengali-English Dictionary. This was indeed the age of grammars and dictionaries, and the name of grammarians[2] and lexicographers who, after Carey, followed in the footsteps of Halhed and Forster, is legion; but none of the works of these writers obtained the reputation and currency which Carey's scholarly

1 J. A. Long in his *Return of the Names and Writings of 515 Persons connected with Bengali Literature* (p. 125) mentions among Carey's works a treatise or pamphlet called *Letter to a Laskar*. It seems that the *Address to a Laskar*, which was written not by Carey but by Pearce of Birmingham, was translated by Carey (see E. Carey, *op. cit*. p. 463 ; also Murdoch, *Catalogue of Christian Vernacular Literature of India*, p. 5). Carey also wrote other missionary tracts which it is not necessary to mention here.

2 The first Bengali Grammar by an Indian grammarian is said to be that by Gaṅgā Kiśor Bhaṭṭāchārya, written in the form of a dialogue. It was published in 1816 (Long, *Catalogue*). This date seems to be incorrect. We find the first announcement of this work in the *Samāchār Darpaṇ* (Oct. 3, 1818) from which it would appear, in the first place, that the book was published about 1818 ; and secondly, that it was not only a grammar but a compendium of miscellaneous information and that the portion dealing with grammar did not relate to Bengali language but that it was an English Grammar in Bengali. See the present writer's article in *Baṅgīya Sāhitya Pariṣat Patrikā*, vol. xxiv, p. 154.

works did. Carey's *Grammar* was composed more than twenty years after Halhed's *Grammar*. Halhed's was indeed a work of merit; but in the interval that had elapsed between its appearance and the institution of public lectures in the Fort William College, it had probably become scarce and was no longer available for the needs of the students of the College. Though ostensibly modelled on Halhed's work, Carey's *Grammar* was altogether a new and original contribution, for Carey had an opportunity of "studying the language with more attention and of examining its structure more closely" than had been done before. While acknowledging the aid he had derived from Halhed, Carey observes (1st Ed. 1801): "I have made some distinctions and observations not noticed by him, particularly on the declension of nouns and verbs and the use of participles." In the preface to the second edition (1805) he says: "Since the first edition of this work was published, the writer had had an opportunity of studying this language with more attention and of examining its structure more closely than he had done before. The result of his studies he has endeavoured to give in the following papers which, on account of the variations from the former editions, may be esteemed a new work." The variations alluded to above refer to the alterations and additions, particularly in the declension and derivation of nouns and in the conjugation of verbs, extending the grammar to nearly double its original size. The later editions, however, do not differ materially from the second edition.

BASIS OF THE LANGUAGE AND OF THE GRAMMAR

Another merit of this *Grammar* arises from the fact that Carey seems to have realised very early that the basis of Bengali as a language must be sought in Sanskrit, its classical progenitor: and this fact enables him to examine critically the ultimate structure of the language and evolve rules fixing the chaotic colloquialism and dialectal variety of the verna-

cular into definite forms. A living language, however, can never be regulated by artificial rules borrowed from a dead language, however closely connected they might be with each other ; and Carey, in giving full scope to colloquial and temporal variations, shows himself fully alive to this fact.

SCOPE OF THE BOOK

The *Grammar of the Bengalee Language*[1] of Carey explains the peculiarities of the Bengali alphabet and the combination of its letters: the declension of substantives and formation of derivative nouns: inflections of adjectives and pronouns: and the conjugation of verbs. It gives copious lists and descriptions of indeclinable verbs, adverbs, prepositions, etc. and closes with syntax and with an appendix of numerals and tables of weights and measures. The rules are comprehensive, though expressed with brevity and simplicity; and the examples, though derived from only a few of the standard works, are sufficiently numerous and well-chosen. There are many defects and inevitable errors, but they are sufficiently obvious and excusable to require any comment and do not materially affect the value of the book.[2]

CAREY'S KATHOPAKATHAN OR DIALOGUES 1801

The syntax, however, is the least satisfactorily illustrated part, but this defect was fully remedied by a separate publication, originally forming a supplement, printed also in 1801, of *Kathopakathan* or *Dialogues* in Bengali, with a translation into English, comprising a great variety of idioms and phrases of current Bengali. Carey's extraordinary command over colloquial Bengali is nowhere better exhibited. There are,

1 The eleven chapters of the work comprehend respectively the following topics: বর্ণপরিচয়, যুক্তবর্ণ, শব্দ ও তাহার বিভিন্ন রূপ (বিশেষ্য), গুণবাচক শব্দ (বিশেষণ), সর্ব্বনাম, ক্রিয়াপদ, শব্দগঠন, অব্যয় ও উপসর্গ, সন্ধিপ্রকরণ, অন্বয় (syntex).

2 See H. H. Wilson, *Remarks on the Character and Labours of Dr. Carey*, appended to E. Carey's Memoirs, London 1836.

no doubt, occasional lapses and errors of idiom[1] which none but a man born to the language can easily realise, yet the extent and variety of topics, the different situations and the different classes of men dealt with in these dialogues show not only a minute and sympathetic observation and familiarity with the daily occupations of the people, their manners, feelings and ideas but also a thorough acquaintance with the resources of the language in its difficult colloquial forms. The book is indeed a rich quarry of the idioms (and even of the *slang*, the class or professional shibboleth) of the spoken dialect of Bengal; and in an age of mere or main translation, of tentative accumulation of vocabulary and experimental adaptation of arrangement, its value is very great. But to this book belongs also the credit of making an early and original attempt to give, in a crude semi-dramatic form, a faithful reflection of the social life in Bengal as it existed a century ago. The class of men who are supposed to carry on these dialogues or colloquies ranges from that of a Shahib, a respectable Bengali gentleman, a merchant, a zemindar and a Brahman priest to that of a peasant, a low class woman, a day-labourer, a fisherman and a beggar. The more regular and measured language of the upper classes is put side by side with the loose style and talk of uncultured women and the lower orders in different situations. Independently of its merit as a help to the acquisition of the language, this work presents in many respects a curious and lively picture of the

1 Carey, however, was so very careful to ensure correctness in this respect that he writes in the Preface: "That the work might be as complete as possible, I have employed some sensible natives to compose dialogues upon subjects of a domestic nature, and to give them precisely in the natural style of the persons supposed to be speakers. I believe the imitation to be so exact that they will not only assist the student, but furnish a considerable idea of the domestic economy of the country". It will be seen, therefore, that the authorship of the entire book does not rest with him, but that the dialogues other than those of a domestic nature were his own. But even these surely reflect great credit on him as a scholar of Bengali.

manner of life led by the middle and lower classes. The faithfulness of the picture is guaranteed by the fact that even in the present day it has not lost all the force and precision of its realism. In his celebrated Sanskrit speech before Lord Wellesley at a public disputation of the College Carey, speaking of his knowledge of the country, said: "I, now an old man, have lived for a long series of years among the Hindoos. I have been in the habit of preaching to multitudes daily, of discoursing with the Brahmans on every subject, and of superintending schools for the instruction of the Hindoo youth. Their language is as familiar to me as my own. This close intercourse with the natives for so long a period, and in different parts of our empire, had afforded me opportunities of information not inferior to those which have hitherto been presented to any other person. I may say indeed that their manners, customs, habits, and sentiments are as obvious to me as if I was myself a native."[1]

SCOPE AND ARRANGEMENT OF THE WORK

The colloquies begin with a sketch of the conversation of an English gentleman, his method of hiring servants, giving out orders, his desire of learning Bengali, his talks with his Munsi etc. The preponderance of Persian words in these dialogues is thus explained by Carey himself: "A Khansama or a Sirkar, talking to an European (and *vice versa*) generally intermixes his language with words derived from Arabic or Persian and some few corrupted English and Portuguese words" (Preface). The rest of the colloquies deal with the conversations and ideas, mostly of the middle and lower classes of the people of Bengal, living in the remote villages. The colloquies may be conveniently arranged thus under different heads of subjects:

(1) Conversation relating to everyday life of middle-class

1 Buchanan, *op. cit.* :Translation of the speech of Carey at p. 168 ; also quoted in Smith, *op. cit.* pp. 167-169 ; also Roebuck, *op. cit.* p. 60.

country gentlemen. (2) Talks about land, its cultivation, farming, produce, rent etc. (3) Talks about business matters e.g. between a debtor and his creditor etc. (4) Conversation "both in friendly and contentious style" between women of various types, their going to market etc. (5) General talks about eating, journeying, taking counsel etc. Conversation among lower classes of people e.g. labourers, fishermen, beggars etc.

Of the colloquies under heads (1) and (5), which are the more interesting of the whole group, those entitled "ভদ্রলোকে ভদ্রলোকে প্রাচীনে প্রাচীনে" (A discourse of respectable old people), "ঘটকালি" (An agreement of marriage), "যাজক যজমান" (A priest and his customer) and the last colloquy entitled simply "কথোপকথন" (Conversation) on the subject of marriage between two *ghaṭaks* are the best. The conversation of the *ghaṭaks*, although a more subdued picture, would remind one of the *ghaṭaks* in Rāmnārāyaṇ's *Kulīn-kula-sarbasva*. Some specimens of unconscious humour will be found in the measured formal speeches of the priests (in what Carey calls "the grave style") as contrasted with the simple talks of laymen.

SPECIMENS OF ITS DIFFERENT STYLES

We give below an extract from the first-named of these colloquies, which throws much light on the social life in the village and at the same time illustrates the more serious style of Carey in these dialogues:

তাহার ভ্রাতুষ্পুত্রেরা কেমন আছেন।

তাহারা মহারাজ চক্রবর্ত্তী তাহারদের সহিত কার কথা তাহারদের প্রতিযোগিতার লোক আমার দেশে নাই।

এবারে কোম্পানীর কায পাইয়া মহাধনাঢ্য হইয়াছে তাহারদের সমান ধনীলোক আমার দেশে চাকরী করিয়া কেহ হইতে পারেন নাই।

কেবল ধনীও নহে বিষয়ও অনেক করিয়াছে আজি নাগাদ কমবেশ লাকো টাকার জমিদারি করিয়াছে।

সমস্তই ভাগ্যের বশীভূত দেখদিকি তাহারা কি ছিলেন এখন বা কি হইয়াছেন। এ আঙ্গুল ফুলিয়া কলাগাছ হইয়াছে।

তাহারদের পূর্ব্ব বিবরণ আমরা সমস্তই জানি মাতাপিতার দুঃখের পরিসীমা ছিল না।

যতক্ষণে বড় ভট্টাচার্য্য কিছু দিতেন তবেই সে দিন নির্ব্বাহ হইত নতুবা হরিমটুক।

এখন ঈশ্বর তাহারদিগকে অতিশয় উন্নত করিয়াছেন ঈশ্বরাধীন কর্ম্ম বড়কে ছোট করিতে পারেন ছোটকে বড় করিতে পারেন।

আমি চিরকাল দেশছাড়া তাহারদের আহার ব্যবহার কি প্রকার।

তাহারদিগের আহার পরিচ্ছদ ভাল বটে।

নিতান্ত আত্মীয় অন্তরঙ্গ লোকের উপকার করা আছে কিন্তু দানাদি সর্ব্বতোভাবে নাই।

ক্রিয়াকর্ম্ম এই ক্ষণে যেরূপ করিতেছে সে নিন্দিত নহে।

কহ জমিদারি যে করিয়াছেন তাহা শাসিত কি প্রকার।

জমিদারি কখন ছিল না এই ক্ষণে হইয়াছে কিন্তু শাসন সুন্দররূপ করিতে পারে নাহি এ বিষয়ে বিজ্ঞ নহে ইহাতে প্রজালোকেরা সুখ্যাতি করে না।

কহ যেরূপ বড়মানুষ হইয়াছেন তাহার মত চলন কিনা লওয়াজিমা কি মত।

লওয়াজিমা যেমত করিয়াছেন তাহার মত ওঠক বৈঠক নহে।

নিত্যক্রিয়া কিরূপ করেন।

এক প্রহর দশ দণ্ডের মধ্যে স্নান করিয়া পূজা বিশিষ্টরূপে করিয়া জলপান ভোজন করেন কুটুম্ব সাখ্যাত যে থাকেন একত্তর ভোজন হয় না।

অতিথি সেবা হইয়া থাকে কি না। তাহাতে আমদ ("reputation"—Carey) যেমন।

অতিথিসেবা করিয়া থাকেন বিশিষ্টরূপে হয় না আমদ সুন্দর নাহি।

ঈশ্বরসেবা কি ধারা করিয়াছেন।

ঈশ্বরসেবা করেন বটে কিন্তু বিশিষ্টমতে নহে। শিবলিঙ্গ ও বিগ্রহ ও শালগ্রাম সকলি সংস্থান করিয়াছেন।

বসৎবাটী কেমত করিয়াছেন।

বাটী চতুর্দ্দিগে চকমিলান করিয়া তিন চারি মহাল করিয়াছেন।

শুনিলাম গঙ্গাস্নানে গ্রামস্থ প্রায় সকলি আসিয়াছিলেন তাহাতে কিরূপ সকলকে তত্ত্ববৃত্তান্ত করিয়াছেন।

ঈশ্বরী গঙ্গাস্নানে গ্রামের প্রায় সকলি আসিয়াছিলেন তাহাতে তত্ত্বাবধারণ বিস্তারিত করিয়াছেন এবং দানাদি বাহুল্য বটে।

সারদীয় পূজার রচনা করিয়া থাকেন।

ঈশ্বর পূজাও দেশের অন্য অন্য লোক যে প্রকার করে তাহার অপেক্ষা বড়।

কমবেশ চারি পাঁচ হাজার টাকা ব্যয় ব্রাহ্মণ ভোজনাদি তিন দিন মিষ্টান্ন খাওয়াইয়া থাকেন অন্য অন্য লোককে বটে।.........

কন্যার বিবাহ দিয়াছেন কি না।

বড় কন্যার বিবাহ অষ্টমবর্ষে নৈকষ্য কুলীন আনিয়া বিবাহ দিয়াছেন। পাত্রটি সুশ্রী সুভব্য বটে।

বিবাহের সময় ব্যয় কেমত করিয়াছিলেন ঘটক কুলীনের আগমন কেমত হইয়াছিল তাহারদের বিদায় কিরূপ করিয়াছেন।

কুলীন প্রায় দুই তিন শত ঘটকও পাঁচ ছয় শত আসিয়াছিল। তাহারদের বিদায় যেমত করিয়াছিলেন তাহাতে সুখ্যাতি হইয়াছে।[1]

MORE COLLOQUIAL STYLE

This is the specimen of the 'graver style', but more colloquial and easy are the dialogues under the heads (2) and (3), although these colloquies, it should be noticed, as well as those between English gentlemen and his servants, are full of Persian words which are comparatively absent in the domestic talk under other heads of subjects. Business

1 *Dialogues intended to facilitate the acquiring of the Bengalee Language*, by W. Carey, D. D. Mission Press 1801. 1st Ed. pp. 66-85 ; 3rd Ed. pp. 36-40. See also 3rd Ed. pp. 108-110. 4th ed. 1818. See 1st Ed. pp. 208-217 for the description of a marriage and the expenses incurred at the wedding.

matters have a language of their own; but Persian for a long time was the court-language and all business matters were transacted in that language. Not only words like মালিক, দস্তকর্জ্জা, খাতিরজমা, একরার, সবুর, মহশুল, তজবিজ, জমিন, নজর which have become almost naturalised in Bengali but even unfamiliar words like তকসির, তরদ্দুদ, বুরা, মাকুল, এলাম, আঞ্জাম, এৎবার, খোড়া are frequently used. Of the other colloquies, that on "A Landlord and his Tenant" ("জমিদার রাইয়ত"), too long, however, for quotation here, is the most remarkable as giving a true picture of the relation between the landlords and their tenants. (3rd Ed. pp. 88-108)

THE LANGUAGE OF THE LOWER ORDERS

The colloquies spoken by the lower orders are bound to be very interesting, but it is to be regretted that these dialogues are very short and not very well-written and their number too is small. The language here must of course differ considerably both in pronunciation and vocabulary from that already quoted. The following short extract will be found illustrative:

তিয়রিয়া কথা।

হাড়ে ভেগো মাচকে যাবি কি না আতিতো কোয়া কোয়া করছে। মুই ফুকারছি তুই ঘুমাইছিস।

বা। এক কাপকড়ে অইয়াছে। হঁ্যা ম্যাগ পড়িছে এখন কি জালে যাবাড় সময়। যা চেঁদে তুই মুইতো এখন যাব না। কালি ঢের আতি থাকিতে গিয়াছিনু ঁ। যাড় বলে খাবার মাচ পেনু ঁ না তাতো আজি ম্যাগ পড়িছে।

হাড়ে ভাই ম্যাগের ভয়ে মোদের কাম চলে না ত্যাবেতো মাগ ছাওয়ালকে ভাত কাপড় দিনু ঁ। তোর বড় দেখি স্থকবাসের শরীর হইয়াছে।[1]

1 It is better to append Carey's translation of this passage here:

Fisherman's talk.

Haloo. Bhego, will you go a fishing ? "Tis getting light. I called: You were asleep.

Aye, aye, this is an excuse. Hah ; it rains ; is it time to go to the

THE LANGUAGE OF WOMEN

The colloquies of women are very faithful and realistic, but some of the pictures are too gross and the language sometimes even borders on indecency[1]. The ladies, however, who figure in these colloquies belong, it seems, mostly to the uncultured lower classes ; and here and there all Billingsgate seems to be let loose at once. It is true that "women", as Carey says, "speak a language considerably differing from that of men, especially in their quarrels", yet he would be far from right if he supposes that this is the measure of women's talk in Bengal. Quotations from these will not be welcome, but here is one dialogue in the "friendly style" sufficiently harmless and representative wherein the ladies seem to belong to the middle class:

তোমরা কয় যা।

আমি সকলের বড় আমার আর তিন যা আছে।

কেমন যায় যায় ভাব আছে কি কালের মত।

আহা ঠাকুরাণী আমার যে জ্বালা আমি সকলের বড় আমাকে তাহারা অমুক-বুদ্ধিও করে না।

আলো সকলেই কি একে।

না। তাহার মধ্যে ছোট ছুঁড়ি ভালমানুষের মাইয়া সেইডি আমাকে উপরোধবাদ করে।

nets now ? Go you to no purpose. I won't go now. Yesterday I went long before light: by so doing I did not get fish to eat, and to-day it rains.

Yes, brother, my work won't go by the fear of clouds. Shall I be able to clothe and feed my wife and children thus ? I see you have a body formed for ease. (*Dialogues*, 1st Ed. pp. 110 et seq ; 3rd Ed. pp. 56-57.)

1 Possibly these dialogues were written by the "sensible natives" whom Carey employed (*vide ante*, footnote p. 124) and who might have misled him. See especially the colloquy headed "মাইয়া কন্দল" (Women's Quarrels) beginning with "তুমি কোথায় গিয়াছিলা পাড়াবেড়ানী" (*Dialogues*. 1st Ed. pp. 156-164 ; 3rd Ed. p. 82 et seq.)

তবে তাহারি সাথে তোমার প্রীত আছে।

প্রীত আছে বটে। কিন্তু সকলে অসৎ তাহাতে সেও সেই মত হয় বা।

সে এখন ছোট আছে তুই একটুক আস্থা মমতা করিস তবে সে তোরি কানোড়া হইবে।

আমার কানোড়া হবে সে এমন কানোড়া হবার যোগ্য না বাঁশ থাকিয়া কঞ্চি দড়।

তবে যে বলিলি সে কিছু ভাল।

ভাল সে কেমন ভাল আমাকে বড় একটা তুচ্ছ মুচ্ছ করে না।

তবু ভাল কেমন তোর ছাল্যডার সেবা সুশ্রূষা করে।

হাঁ তা বটে। আমার ছাল্য পিল্য প্রায় তাহারি কাছে থাকে সে ইহারদিগকে খাওয়ায় ধোয়ায়।

আর আর মাগীরা দিন রাতি কচ কচ ঝক ঝক করিতেছেই তাহার কামাই নাই রাবণের চিলুব মত জ্বলিতেছেই। সদাই মাথামুড়া খাওয়া আছেই।

তবে কাহার সাতে কাহার প্রীত নাই।

প্রায় না প্রীত কি ভাল মুখে আলাপ ও নাই কেবল মাথামুড়া খাওয়া কাটাঘাটা মাত্র।

ওলো তোর ভাতার কারে কেমন ভালবাসে তাহা বল শুনি।

আহা তাহার কথা কহ কেন এখন আর আমারদের কি আদর আছে নূতনের দিগে মন ব্যতিরেক পুরানের দিগে কে চাহে।

তা হউক। তুই সকলের বড় তোর ছাল্য পিল্য হইয়াছে।

কালি যে ভাই ডুপর বেলা কচকচি লাগালে মাঝ্য বিটি তাহা কি বলিব।

কি জন্য কচকচি হইল।

দুর কর ভাই। তাহা কহিলে আর কি হবে লোকে শুনিলে মন্দ বলিবে আমার বাড়ীভরা শত্রু এই জন্য ভয় করি।

বড় বৌ আমার মাথার দিব্বি সত্য করিয়া বল।

কালি ডুপর বেলা ছোট বৌ রান্ধিয়াছিল ইহার মধ্যে আমার ছাল্য

আগে ভাত খাইয়াছিল ইহার মধ্যে মাঝ্য মাগী আসিয়া দ্বন্দ্ব আরম্ভ করিলেক।

তোর গো বাড়ীর মায়্যাগুলা কেহ কার ভাল দেখিতে পারে না।

কি করিব এমত ঠাই নাই যে সেখানে গিয়া দশ পাঁচ দিন থাকি গায় বাতাস লাগে।

কেন তোর ভাইদের বাড়ী দিন কত যা না কেন।

তাহাদের বাড়ী যাব কি তাহা হইলে তবে ভাইখাগীরদের কাছে রক্ষা আছে। আমার ভাইদের নাম শুনিতে পারে না কেহ। কর্ত্তা যিনি তিনি দ্বন্দ্ব ডাকাডাকির জন্য বাড়ী প্রায় থাকেন না যখন আইসেন তখন গালাগালি তিরস্কার করেন।

তোরদের সংসারের এমত বাক্যতা ছিল এখন এমত অবাক্যতা হইয়াছে।

মায়্য ছুটার বিবাহ দিতে পারিলে আমি সাতটা সর্ষা দিয়া স্নান করি কুলাই ছণ্ডির ডাড়া গুয়াপান দেই সুবচনী পূজা করি মনস্কামনা সিদ্ধি করিলে।

মায়্যর বিবাহের কোথায় ঠাওরাইয়াছ দেশের মধ্যে না বিদেশে দিবা।

ঈশ্বরের মনে কি আছে বুঝি না আমার ইচ্ছা দেশের মধ্যে হইলে ভাল হয়।

তোমার যারা সকলে কি বলে মাইয়ার মামা মামী মাসী তাহারা কি বলে পাঁচটার যে মত সেই কর্ত্তব্য।

সে যে হউক। আমি বাড়ী যাই বেলা গেল এখনি গালাগালি দিবে।[1]

This is indeed a fine piece but the *Women's Quarrels* are not so attractive.

IMPORTANCE OF CAREY'S DIALOGUES

Critics have found fault with Carey the missionary for giving these latter gross colloquies a place in his book which was intended to be a text-book for young civilian students; but fastidious considerations apart, these dialogues certainly exhibit the true picture of a certain type

1 *Dialogues*, 1st Ed. pp. 148-156; 3rd Ed. pp. 76-82.

or class in every society, interesting to the student of the drama, novel or social history. A strong tendency to objective realism in Carey demanded a *verbatim* reproduction of the language of the people ; had he listened to his missionary scruples, the picture, like Johnson's in *Rasselas*, would have been unnatural or imperfect. In this respect Carey has been called, not unwisely or too enthusiastically, the spiritual father of Ṭekchānd and Dīnabandhu. That Carey had fine dramatic instincts, which if developed would have borne better fruits, and that he was more than a mere compiler, has been put beyond all doubt by the *Colloquies* which, to the student of Bengali, is more than a mere treatise "intended to facilitate the acquiring of the language."

We have dwelt rather too long on Carey's *Dialogues* but the importance of the book in the light of subsequent history can never be ignored. With regard to the style and language of all these dialogues it should be noticed that here we have, at the outset, the first trace of the opposition between the plain and the ornate styles in prose which is to dominate the rest of its history and reach to a crisis in the opposition of the 'Ālāli style' and the 'Sanskrit College style' of the fifties. We shall have occasion to come back to this point hereafter; but it is to be noted here that this perpetually recurring antinomy in the history of prose style was for the first time clearly posed and definitely worked out by Carey's simple colloquial prose on the one side, and the elaborate diction of the Pundits, especially of Mṛtyuñjay, on the other.

CAREY'S ITIHĀSA-MĀLĀ

The best example of a style, more dignified than the colloquial prose of the *Dialoques*, more pure and correct than the prose of Rām Rām Basu or Chaṇḍīcharaṇ, yet less affected than the ornate and laboured style of Mṛtyuñjay, is to be found in the *Itihās-mālā*[1] of Carey, which chronologi-

1 ইতিহাসমালা । or A Collection of Stories in the Bengalee Language collected from various sources. By W. Carey D. D. Teacher of Sungskrit,

cally, however, comes after almost all the important Bengali publications of the Fort William College, except *Prabodh-chandrikā* and *Puruṣ-parīkṣā*, and consequently had the advantage of having got more time for maturing in the meanwhile. It was printed and published at Śrīrāmpur in 1812 and, as its name implies, it is "a collection of stories in the Bengalee language, collected from various sources." The book contains 150 stories,[1] derived not only from books of fables and folk-lore, eastern and western, but also from past literature, legends and history. There are, for instance, besides tales from *Hitopadeśa* or *Pañcha-tantra*, the well-known story of Lahanā and Khullanā[2] as well as an anecdote of Akbar.[3] The stories are amusing and instructive; but the book consists mostly of translation and its interest chiefly lies in its simple homely prose style. It is difficult to select a specimen, for space would not allow us to quote more than one. The following extract will be found interesting not only for its style but also for the touch of humour which is rather rare in these early works[4]:

বিবাহ হইতে অধিবাস শক্ত যে প্রসিদ্ধ আছে তাহার কথা এই।

একজন ঘটক ব্রাহ্মণ অর্থাৎ বিবাহের যোজক এক বনের মধ্য দিয়া আসিতেছিল সে স্থানে এক ব্যাঘ্র ঐ ঘটক ব্রাহ্মণকে মারিতে উদ্যত হইলে ব্রাহ্মণ ভীত হইয়া ক্রন্দন করিতে লাগিল। ব্যাঘ্র ঘটকের ক্রন্দন দেখিয়া জিজ্ঞাসা করিলেক তুমি কি কারণ কান্দিতেছ ব্রাহ্মণ কহিলেক আমি ঘটক বিবাহের যোজকতা করিয়া ধনোপার্জ্জন করিয়া স্ত্রী পুত্র প্রভৃতির ভরণপোষণ করি আমি মরিলে তাহারা কোনমতে বাঁচিবেক না ইহা শুনিয়া ব্যাঘ্র বিবেচনা করিল আমি ব্যাঘ্রীহীন ব্রাহ্মণ বিবাহের যোজকতা করে পরে কহিলেক হে ঘটক তুমি আমার বিবাহ দেও ব্যাঘ্রী না থাকাতে আমি বড়

Bengalee and Mahratta Languages in the College of Fort William. Serampore: Printed at the Mission Press 1812.

1 Distributed over 320 pages.

2 *Itihās-mālā*, p. 240.

3 *Ibid.* p. 314.

4 *Ibid.* story 16, pp. 37-40.

দুঃখী আছি তুমি আমার বিবাহ দিলে আমি তোমাকে নষ্ট করিব না। ব্রাহ্মণ ব্যাঘ্রের বাক্য শ্রবণ করিয়া কহিলেক বিবাহ করা বড় কঠিন অর্থ না হইলে হয় না। ব্যাঘ্র কহিলেক আমি অর্থ দিতে পারি ব্যাঘ্র পূর্ব্বে একজন লোক মারিয়াছিল তাহার অনেক অর্থ ছিল সে সেই সকল অর্থ ব্রাহ্মণের নিকটে উপস্থিত করিলে ব্রাহ্মণ অর্থ লইয়া কহিলেক এই অর্থেতেই তোমার বিবাহ হইবেক কিন্তু বিবাহের পূর্ব্বে অধিবাস করিতে হইবেক সে বড় কঠিন। ব্যাঘ্র কহিলেক যদি আমার বিবাহ হয় তবে অধিবাস যে শক্ত তাহা আমি করিব। পরে ব্রাহ্মণ কহিল আমি গ্রামে গিয়া অধিবাসের সামগ্রী আয়োজন করিয়া আনি। ব্যাঘ্র ঘটককে অনেক অর্থ দিয়া বিদায় করিলেক। ব্রাহ্মণ বাটী আসিয়া চর্ম্মকারের বাটী গিয়া এক চর্ম্মের কল ঘর লইল যাহাতে ব্যাঘ্র বন্ধন হয় ও ঐ বনে লইয়া গেল ব্যাঘ্র সেই স্থানে বসিয়া আছে ব্রাহ্মণ কল সহিত ব্যাঘ্রের নিকটে গিয়া কহিল এই অধিবাসের সামগ্রী ইহার মধ্যে প্রবেশ করিয়া চারি দণ্ড শয়ন করিতে হইবেক। ব্যাঘ্র বিবাহের আহ্লাদে ঐ কলের মধ্যে শয়ন করিলেক। ব্রাহ্মণ কলের দ্বারা বন্ধন করিয়া অনেকে একত্র হইয়া ঐ কল সহিত ব্যাঘ্রকে নদীতে ফেলাইয়া দিলেক। ব্যাঘ্র কলের সহিত নদীতে ভাসিতে লাগিল ইতিমধ্যে এক ব্যাঘ্রী দেখিয়া ঐ চর্ম্ম কল ধরিলেক ভিজে চর্ম্ম দন্তে ছিঁড়িয়া ফেলাইলেক। তখন ব্যাঘ্রের সহিত সাক্ষাৎ হইল ব্যাঘ্র ব্যাঘ্রীকে দেখিয়া বড় সন্তুষ্ট হইয়া উভয়ের মিলন হইল। ব্যাঘ্র ও ব্যাঘ্রী ঐ ব্রাহ্মণের বাটীতে গেল ব্রাহ্মণ দেখিয়া বড় ভীত হইল ব্যাঘ্র ব্রাহ্মণকে বড় ভীত দেখিয়া অনেক প্রকার অভয় বাক্য কহিল। তুমি আমার বিবাহের ঘটক আমি তোমাকে তুষ্ট করিতে আসিয়াছি। এই কথা কহিয়া ব্রাহ্মণকে অনেক অর্থ দিয়া প্রণাম করিয়া সেই বনে গেল।

CAREY'S DICTIONARY OF THE BENGALEE LANGUAGE

A more laborious and important publication was effected at a later date by Carey in his famous *Dictionary of the Bengalee Language* in two quarto volumes. With hardly a model before him except Forster's *Vocabulary* or Miller's

Dictionary,[1] neither of which is hardly complete in itself. Carey achieved this useful and scholarly work after a labour of thirty years, and it deserves all the praise that has been bestowed upon it. Though, like his *Grammar*, it hardly belongs to the province of literature pure or proper, this book did much in stimulating the cause of literature and fixing the forms and expressions of the language, and for a long time it continued to be the standard work on the subject. The first volume was published in 1815; but the typographical form adopted being found likely to extend the work to an inconvenient size, it was subsequently reprinted in 1818. A second volume in two parts appeared by 1825. These three volumes comprehend about 2,000 quarto pages and about 80,000 words,[2] a number that equally denotes the copiousness of the language and the industry of the compiler. Besides the meaning of words, their derivation is given whereever ascertainable. This is almost always the case, as a great many of the words included are Sanskrit or Sanskritic. Halhed (*Grammar*, Preface. p. xx) had long since maintained "the impossibility of learning the Bengali dialect without a general and comprehensive idea of the Sanscrit" on account of the close and intimate relation between the two. Following him, Carey himself always regarded Sanskrit as "the parent of nearly all the colloquial dialects of India"[3] and "the current medium of conversation amongst the Hindoos, until gradually corrupted by a number of local causes, so as to form the languages at present spoken in the various parts of Hindoostan and perhaps those of some of the neighbouring countries."[4]

1 Published in 1801. See above p. 81 footnote.

2 Forster's *Vocabulary* contained only 18,000 words. Carey, however, acknowledges his indebtedness to Forster in the Preface to his *Dictionary*.

3 Preface to *Sanscrit Grammar*, 1806.

4 Preface to *Bengali Dictionary*, 1818.

Carey, therefore, observes with regard to the materials of his *Dictionary* that "considerably more than three-fourths of the words are pure Sungskrit, and those composing the greatest part of the remainder are so little corrupted that their origin may be traced without difficulty." He also states that he has endeavoured to introduce into the *Dictionary* every simple word used in the language and all the compound terms which are commonly current or which are to be found in the standard Bengali works. It may be thought indeed that in the latter respect he has been more scrupulous than it was absolutely necessary and has inserted compounds which might have been dispensed with, their analysis being obvious and their elements being explained in their appropriate places. The *Dictionary* also includes many derivative terms and privative, attributive and abstract nouns which, though of legitimate construction, may rarely occur in composition and are of palpable signification. The instances of such, although they swell the dictionary into an inconvenient and costly bulk, evince at the same time the compiler's careful research, his conscientious exactitude, and his unwearied industry. The English equivalents of the Bengali words are well-chosen and are generally of unquestionable accuracy.[2] Local terms are rendered with that correctness which Carey's knowledge of the manners of the people and his long domestication amongst them enabled him to attain; and his scientific acquirements and familiarity with the subjects of natural history qualified him to employ, and not unfrequently to devise, characteristic denominations for the products of the animal and vegetable world peculiar to the East.

MARSHMAN'S ABRIDGEMENT, 1827

The objection taken to this *Dictionary* on account of its bulk, was subsequently removed by the publication of an

2 See H. H. Wilson, *Remarks on the Character and Labours of Dr. Carey as an Oriental Scholar and Translator* (appended to E. Carey's *Memoirs*, London 1836).

abridgement, prepared under Carey's own superintendence by J. Marshman and printed in 1827.[1] Most of the compound and derivative terms were omitted and the publication was reduced to one thick octavo volume. Although this abridgement has the advantage of being more readily consulted, it does not however by any means obviate the necessity of the original which was regarded as a standard work on the subject until replaced by a better one.

ESTIMATE OF CAREY'S WORK AND CHARACTER

In order to make a final estimate of Carey's position in the history of modern Bengali literature it would be necessary to take into account other writers who flourished in this period and with respect to whom his position must be determined ; yet it is hoped that a few words here would not be out of place. It may be observed that Carey never claimed anything for himself save the credit of having worked zealously and assiduously. He said to his nephew Eustace, his future biographer : "If after my removal any one should think it worth while to write my life, I will give you a criterion by which you may judge of its correctness. If he gives me credit of being a plodder he will describe me justly. Anything beyond this will be too much. I can plod. I can persevere in any definite pursuit. To this I owe everything"[2]. There is indeed some truth in this self-estimate, but the modesty of the scholar precludes him from ascertaining the true value of his life's work.

It cannot be denied at the outset that Carey had a clear, vigorous intellect ; he was a man of no ordinary powers of

1 This is in two vols. The first volume is an abridgement of the preceding *Dictionary* of Carey (Bengali-English) ; the second is a Dictionary, English and Bengali, compiled by J. C. Marshman. 1st Ed. vol. I, 1827 : vol. II, 1828 ; 4th Ed. 1847.

2 E. Carey, *op. cit.* p. 623 ; also quoted in J. Culross's *William Carey*, London 1881. p. 5.

mind ; capable of strenuous and enduring application ; many-sided, his tastes were varied and his attainment vast. But, even admitting all this, it must be observed that he had no imagination, no philosophic insight, no splendid native endowments of any sort. Hardly any of his writings can be strictly called a work of genius. He modestly introduces himself in the Preface to his *Dialogues* as mere compiler, one who paves the way and leads the student to the higher classical works in the language. "The great want of books" he says "to assist in acquiring this language, which is current through an extent of country nearly equal to Great Britain, which, when properly cultivated, will be inferior to none in elegance and perspicuity, has induced me to compile this small work ; and to undertake the publishing of two or three more, principally translations from the Sungskrit. These will form a regular series of books in the Bengalee, gradually becoming more and more difficult, till the student is introduced to the highest classical works in the language". This was his main object in writing Bengali books: he was never inspired by any literary enthusiasm or artistic impulse of creation. His language and his interests are perfectly definite and practical ; there is hardly any touch of elevation or attempt at fine writing anywhere. That he was capable of better things, is, as we have already pointed out, obvious from his *Dialogues* ; yet even this work was meant chiefly as a text-book, and as such it hardly afforded many opportunities for the display of his inherent literary powers. Most of his other writings consist of translation or compilation. Yet, after all is said, it must be admitted that whetever talent could achieve without genius, Carey did accomplish. If he wrote no great imaginative work, he at least prepared the way for the writing of such. His writings were inspired not by any desire of fame nor by any need of satisfying a peremptory personal craving to write, but wholly and solely by the wish of what he thought to be benefitting the people.

CAREY'S PLACE IN BENGALI LITERATURE

What then is his place? He had no originality as a worker in literature and no creative power. But he was a good reproducer of knowledge; and as an educator of the nation, his work and his influence were alike very great. Discouraged by the authorities and under the Company liable to deportation, he and his colleagues devoted themselves with courage to evangelisation and study of the vernacular. Of this, we shall have occasion to speak more in detail; but it is chiefly for this educational purpose, as an indirect means of evangelisation, that his books were written. They are all rudimentary, no doubt, but to them belongs the merit of first reducing to a system the chaotic colloquialism of the Bengali tongue. Knowing full well that the literature of a nation in the long run must be of indigenous growth, he at once pressed into service Bengali scholars and writers. By his own exertions as well as by those of others which he instigated or superintended, he left not only the students of the language well provided with elementary books, but supplied standard compositions in prose for the native writers of Bengali, and laid the foundation of a cultivated prose style and a flourishing literature throughout the country. It cannot indeed be said that Carey and his colleagues have "raised Bengali to the rank of a literary dialect" as the Jesuits of Madras are said to have done to the language of the South.[1] None of the works of these missionaries is acknowledged to-day as classical by Bengali authors or Bengali readers; and Bengal had a language and literature of its own long before the missionaries even dreamt of coming out to this country; yet this language had decayed and the literature had been forgotten. It was at this time that Carey came to Bengal. In order to understand what he did for the literature we must

1 W. Hunter, *Indian Empire* (London 1882), p. 364. In the same strain Smith, the enthusiastic biographer of Carey, says "for the Bengali-speaking race, William Carey created a literary language a century ago." (*op. cit.* p. 186).

recollect in what state he had found it when he made the first start. There was hardly any printed book ; manuscripts were rare ; and all artistic impulse or literary tradition was almost extinct. To Carey belongs the credit of having raised the language from its debased condition of an unsettled dialect to the character of a regular and permanent form of speech, capable, as in the past, of becoming the refined and comprehensive vehicle of a great literature in the future. Poetry there was enough in ancient literature ; there was a rudiment of prose too, not widely known or cultivated. But Carey's was indeed one of the earliest attempts to write simple and regular prose for the expression of everyday thoughts of the nation. Other writers contemporaneous with him, like Rām Basu or Mṛtyuñjay, took Persian or Sanskrit as their model and their prose in consequence became somewhat quaint, affected and elaborate ; but the striking feature of Carey's prose is its simplicity. It is pervaded by a strong desire for clearness and for use, and by a love of the language itself. It succeeds in being clear and useful and it pleases by force of these elements. It is true that, in spite of all this, Carey must be admitted to have been in literature still a learner, not a master in any sense ; but we must not in our haste forget the pioneer who did the spade-work and paved the way for later glories. Such a pioneer Carey was, and eminently fitted for this task he was by his acquirements as well as by his position.

A FRIEND OF BENGALI LITERATURE

We have seen that Carey not only wrote in Bengali himself, but with his influence in the Fort William College and reputation as a Bengali scholar and friend of Bengali writers, he succeeded in inducing many learned Bengalis to the promotion and preparation of good Bengali works. With the aid of the Press at Śrīrāmpur and the collaboration of his colleagues, and in subordination to its special purpose of

multiplying copies of the Bengali Bible, he devoted himself to the printing, as we shall see, of the first efforts of native literary talent. From 1801 to 1825 many useful works in Bengali as well as in other languages[1] issued from the Mission Press at Śrīrāmpur, to most of which Carey contributed encouragement and aid. Many of the older Bengali classics were printed at the Mission and made accessible to the reading public. The editions of the *Rāmāyaṇ* of Kṛttibās and *Annadāmaṅgal* of Bhāratchandra, published through the zeal of Carey, remained for a long time the standard texts of these ancient works. The promotion of Bengali literature thus effected by the example and impulse of the Press of Śrīrāmpur had been very important, although after 1825 it became less necessary because of numerous printing press springing up in Calcutta for the promotion of indigenous talent. But this alteration of the state of things after 1825 is itself due mainly to the example and influence of Carey and the missionaries at Śrīrāmpur.

Nothing would be more fitting to close this perfunctory estimate of Carey and his works than the high tribute paid to Carey by a competent authority, the celebrated lexicographer and scholar, Rām Kamal Sen. "I must acknowledge here" he says in the Preface to his *Bengali-English Dictionary*

1 In the Appendix to the Tenth *Memoir*, relative to Srīrāmpur translations (1832) is given a review of the work of the Mission since its commencement. It is shown that two hundred and twelve thousand volumes in forty different languages at a cost of over £80,000 have been issued between 1801 and 1832. The Mission was practically the first in the field in its assiduous study of the different dialects and languages of India. In the Sixth *Memoir* (dated March 1816) we find 34 specimens of 33 Indian languages given. The whole discussion, Grierson points out (*Indian Antiquary*, 1903, p. 246), is the first systematic survey of the languages of India. Before this, Gilchrist in his *Oriental Fabulist* (1805) had attempted to give a polyglot version of Æsop's fables ; but he confined himself to giving specimens only in six languages including classical Sanskrit and Arabic.

(1830), "that whatever has been done towards the revival of the Bengali language, its improvement, and in fact, the establishment of it as a language, must be attributed to that excellent man, Dr. Carey, and his colleagues, by whose liberality and great exertions, many works have been carried through the press, and the general tone of the language of this province has been so greatly raised."

CHAPTER VI

THE PUNDITS AND MUNSIS OF THE FORT WILLIAM COLLEGE

RĀM RĀM BASU

After William Carey the next writer of importance, who composed two of the earliest original works in Bengali prose was Rām Rām Basu, who unlike Carey was a native of Bengal, born at Chinsurah towards the end of the 18th century and educated at the village of Nimteh in the 24 Pergunnas. He was a Bañgaja Kāyastha, as is indicated in his *Pratāpāditya-Charitra.* To quote Dr. Carey's account: "Ram Bose before he attained his sixteenth year became a perfect master of Persian and Arabic. His knowledge of Sungskrit was not less worthy of note."[1] Such was his reputation for proficiency in these languages that Carey speaks of him admiringly "a more devout scholar than him I did never see."[2] It was this reputation for learning which secured to him the post of a subordinate Pundit[3] in the College of Fort William on May 4, 1801. It should be noted here that Rāmmohan, according to some, was the author of the first original prose treatise in Bengali; because his Bengali work on Monotheism (হিন্দুগণের পৌত্তলিকতার প্রতিবাদ) was, according to himself, written when he was only sixteen,

1 *Original Papers of Carey in the care of Serampore Missionary Library*, quoted in N. Ray's *Pratāpāditya-Charitra* p. 185.

2 Buchanan, *op. cit*, speaks of him as "a learned native" ; Marshman, *op. cit.*, describes him as "one of the most accomplished Bengali scholars of the day."

3 Rām Basu was at first a Munshi to John Thomas, appointed in March 1787 (Thomas's second visit to India was in July 1786). He then accompanied Thomas to Maldah where the latter worked at an Indigo Factory. Thomas left India in 1792. Again when Thomas returned with Carey to India in Nov. 11, 1794 Rām Basu came and joined.

and supposing him to have been born in 1774, or even, according to others, as late as 1780, the book must have been written before any of the publications of the Fort William College or of the Śrīrāmpur Press was issued. But this book meant for private circulation was never printed or published; it is doubtful if such a book was written at all by Rāmmohan. Rāmmohan's earliest publication in Bengali was in 1815.[1] It seems, therefore, that Rām Rām Basu's position as the first original writer in modern Bengali prose still, after all, remains unassailable. Carey reports to have heard that Rām Rām took the manuscripts of his first work, *Pratāpāditya-charitra* to Rāmmohan, and got it thoroughly revised by him.[2] Whatever may have been his relation with Rāmmohan, Rām Basu was at the same time a great friend of the Missionaries, consorted for many years with Thomas as his Munshi and was for some time Carey's Munsi. He died in August 7, 1813. The day after his death, his son Narottam Basu was appointed in his place.

1 Rāmmohan was in Calcutta from 1801-3, then he left for 11 years, coming beck to Calcutta about the end of 1814.

2 But of this there is no evidence. Rām Rām Basu's *Attack on Brahmins* (called simply *on Brahmins* in Murdoch's *Catalogue* pp. 4-8 ; 25-26), as well as his other writings, shows that many of his views were similar to those of Rāmmohan. In Long's *Catalogue* p. 85, this work of Rām Rām Basu on Brahmins is called জ্ঞানোদয় and the date given is 1801 (the real date is 1800). Speaking of this work, Marshman, *op. cit.*, says that in it "he exposed the absurdities of Hinduism and the pretension of its priesthood with great severity" and pays him the compliment of having "wielded the power of sarcasm inherent in the language with singular effect." The missionaries were deluded with the hope that Rām Rām Basu would embrace Christianity, but the hope was never realised. He had to leave Carey in 1796, who discharged him on account of an intrigue with a woman. When Carey came to Serampore and settled there on Jan. 10, 1800 we find Rām Basu writing some Christian tracts under his inspiration: (i) Gospel Messenger (ii) জ্ঞানোদয় 1800 (iii) খৃষ্ট চরিত্র (1801) or the *Immortal History of Christ in Verse*, 12 mo. 250 pp. Murdoch, *Catalogue*, however, dates it at about 1810. But

RĀM RĀM BASU'S WORKS

From whatever source the impetus might have come, Rām Basu wrote two important original works in Bengali under the patronage of the Fort William College—

1. *Rājā Pratāpāditya-charitra,*[1] 1801, July;
2. *Lipimālā,* 1802.

PRATĀPĀDITYA-CHARITRA 1801

Pratāpāditya-charitra[2] is said to be "the first prose work and the first historical one that appeared" (Long's *Catalogue*).

Rām Rām Basu never became a Christian (Marshman, *op. cit.*, i. 132 ; C. B. Lewis, *op. cit.*, p. 55.

1 This work, like *Mahārāj Kṛṣṇachandra Rāyasya Charitram*, was written at the inducement of Carey. Rām Rām Basu helped Carey in his translation of the Bible (see *Calcutta Review*, vol. x. p. 134). The description of the Christian tract called the *Gospel Messenger*, mentioned by Long, is thus given in Murdoch's *Catalogue* ; "Three months later (i.e. June 1800) a Tract was printed under the title of the 'Gospel Messenger', which was written 'to usher in the Bible." This little book contained a hundred lines in Bengali verse. "The Gospel Messenger was the first thoroughly native tract printed in Bengali." See also Smith, *op. cit.* p. 203 ; Marshman, *Hist. of Seramp. Miss.* pp. 131-132 ; Eustace Carey, *op. cit.*. p. 403, 422.

2 The title-page says : রাজা প্রতাপাদিত্যচরিত্র। যিনি বাস করিলেন যশহরের ধুমঘাটে। একব্বর বাদসাহের আমলে। রাম রাম বসুর রচিত। শ্রীরামপুরে ছাপা হইল। ১৮০১। The History of Raja Pratapaditya By Ram Ram Boshoo one of the Pundits in the College of Fort William, Serampore. Printed at the Mission Press, 1802. pp. 1-156. Entered with identical date, place of publication and name of the author in the *Catalogue of the Library of the Hon. East India Company* 1845, p. 195. An excellent edition of this work, which had been out of print since the first edition in 1801, was brought out by Nikhilnath Ray under the auspices of the Baṅgīya Sāhitya Pariṣat. With regard to the extracts quoted, we have carefully compared the text given here with that in the first edition. as we find it in the copy of the work in the Library of Board of Examiners. The references are given to both the original as well as to N. Ray's edition as the latter is more easily procurable. The page-reference given here in the text is, in the first place, to the 1st edition (Library of Board of Examiners) and then to N. Ray's edition.

Its claim to be considered as the first piece of original prose work we have briefly discussed. As an historical work, too, its place is very high. In the description of it given in Buchanan's *College of Fort William* (1805), it is said to have been "composed from authentic dacuments", and Rām Rām Bas● himself at the beginning of his book says:

সংপ্রতি সর্ব্বারম্ভে এ দেশে প্রতাপাদিত্য নামে এক রাজা হইয়াছিলেন তাহার বিবরণ কিঞ্চিত পারস্য ভাষায় গ্রন্থিত আছে সাঙ্গপাঙ্গরূপে সামুদাইক নাহি আমি তাহারদিগের স্বশ্রেণী একেই জাতি ইহাতে তাহার আপনার পিতৃ পিতামহের স্থানে শুনা আছে অতএব আমরা অধিক জ্ঞাত এবং আর ২ অনেকে মহারাজার উপাখ্যান আনুপূর্ব্বিক জানিতে আকিঞ্চন করিলেন এ জন্য যেমত আমার শ্রুত আছে তদনুযায়ি লেখা যাইতেছে।[1]

It seems, therefore, that the work—one of the very few treatises on a little-known period of history—is based upon both authentic history and tradition; but the learned Pundit seems to have taken every precaution to make it a truly historical work, as far as possible. Competent critics have pronounced this work to be genuinely historical, in spite of its occasional aberrations due to hasty shifting of gossip and fact. The scanty facts and abundant fancies as to the life of Pratāpāditya are a commonplace of history. But leaving aside guess-work and speaking of certainties, modern research has been able to make little additions to what Rām Rām Basu had written a century ago.[2] Whatever might be the value of his historical conclusions, we are bound to admit at least that the book evinces a careful historical treatment and a truly historical spirit, although the work is not history in the proper sense of the term. This treatment and this spirit were hitherto unknown. There are indeed a few so-called biographical and historical works in ancient Bengali

1 রাজা প্রতাপাদিত্যচরিত্র, pp. 3-4 ; p. 1.

2 See Nikhil Nath Ray's Edition p. 199, where the claim of this work as a piece of history is discussed.

literature, such as *Chaitanya-bhāgabat* or *Chaitanya-charitāmṛta*, but these works, written in verse, are, in tone and subject, more religious than historical, and ostensibly modelled on the ancient *Purāṇas*. It is true that as contemporaneous records of society reflected in them, these works may supply materials to a historian but the works themselves can hardly be called historical. Indeed to Rām Rām we must give the credit of being the first Bengali prose-writer who attempted to write history in the sense in which it is taken to-day.[1] The story is given in a connected and interesting manner, enlivened by visual pictures, descriptions and anecdotes ; and Rām Rām Basu's power of representing historical incidents, without being dry or discursive, is undoubted. As a pioneer in the field this is a high compliment indeed. His is the plain narrative style, suited to his work, with little embellishments (except by way of gorgeous descriptions) or suggestiveness, but marked with a certain interesting idiosyncracy of character in spirit and form.

A SPECIMEN OF HIS STYLE AND TREATMENT

It is not possible to give too many extracts but the following, it is hoped, will illustrate his general manner and powers of description.

এ দিগে ক্রমে ক্রমে কেদার রায় প্রভৃতি ভূইয়ারদিগকে নিপাত করিয়া তাহারদের রাজ্য লইল। আপন তরফের লোক সর্ব্বত্রে নিযুক্ত করিয়া

1 There are occasional touches of exaggeration or fancifulness, peculiar to oriental, especially Persian, writers ; but these are pardonable enough (e.g. his description of ধুমঘাটের পুরী etc). The book, however, was so highly regarded that it was translated from original Bengali into the Marhatta language in 1816 (Roebuck *op. cit.* App. II) and rewritten by Hariś Chandra Tarkālaṅkār in 1853 (*vide poste* p. 154). W. Pertsch, the editor of *Kṣitiśa-vaṃśāvalī-charitaṃ* (Berlin 1852) alludes to this work but its scarcity even in his day made it difficult for him to obtain a copy, and he contents himself by the account of it given in the *Calcutta Review*, xiii. 1850, p. 135.

রাজ্য রাজ্যের খাজানা আদায়তে প্রবর্ত্ত। তাহারদের মধ্যে কেবল রাজা রামচন্দ্র বাকলাওয়ালা ভূইয়া তাহার রাজ্য কবজ করিল এবং সে পলায়ন করিয়া দেশান্তরি হইল। তাহার বিবরণ এই।

রামচন্দ্র প্রতাপাদিত্যের জামাতা তাহার অধিকারের উপর চড়াই না করিয়া ঠাওরাই কোন কৌশলে দেশ কবজ করে তাহা করিল একটা প্রবন্দে নিমন্ত্রণ দিয়া তাহাকে আনাইল ধুমঘাট নিজ পুরীর মধ্যে তাহাতে খাতিরজমায় থাকিল ভাবিল এখন কাবুর তলে থাকিলেন আবশ্যক হইলে ইহাকে সংহার করণের আটক হবেক না আর আর কেদার রায় প্রভৃতি সমস্তকেই নিপাত করিয়া তাহার অধিকার আপন লোক দিয়া শাসন করিলেন।

ইতিমধ্যে রামচন্দ্র ব্যতিরেক আর আর সমস্তই করতল প্রতাপাদিত্য ঠাওরাইলেন এখন রামচন্দ্রের রাজ্যে কবজকরণের আটক হইতে পারে না। মাত্র অখ্যাতি লোকে বলিবেক জামাতার অধিকার কাড়িয়া লইল ইহা না করিয়া যদি উহাকে গুপ্তে সংহার করিয়া মৃত্যুর সমাচার সর্ব্বত্রে দিয়া শোকাচার করিলে পশ্চাত রাজ্য কবজ করণে অখ্যাতি হবেক না। এতএব সেই কর্ত্তব্য।

এই রচণা করিয়া হুকুম হইল অদ্যই কোন ক্রমে গুপ্তে সংহার করহ তাহাকে। বিবেচনা এই হইল। প্রাতে যখন গাত্রোত্থান করিয়া বাহিরে যাবে সেই কালে সাঙ্গত্য ক্রমে গুপ্তে তাহার শিরচ্ছেদন করে।

এই কথা পরামর্শ হইলে অস্ত্রধারি লোক স্থানে স্থানে নিয়োজিত হইল। এ সকল কথা পরম্পর পূরী মধ্যে প্রচার হইলে রাজ কন্যা শুনিয়া উৎকন্ঠিত দিবাংশে স্বামীর গোচর করিতে পারেন না। এইরূপ চিন্তাতে দিবাগত হইলে সাঙ্গত্যক্রমে স্বামীকে এ সকল বৃত্তান্ত তন্মতে নিবেদন করিলেন। রাজ জামাতা এ সকল শুনিয়া বিস্ময়াপন্ন হইলেন এবং যথোচিত ক্ষুন্ন ভাবিলেন কি ক্রমে এখান হইতে নির্গত হইতে পারা যায়। রাজকন্যা কহেন উপায় কিছু দেখি না ঈশ্বর বুঝি আমার বৈধব্য দসা করিলেন।

রায় বিস্তর চিন্তিয়া কহিলেন তোমার ভ্রাতা উদয়াদিত্যের সহিত আমার যথেষ্ঠ প্রণয় তুমি তাহাকে এ স্থানে আনিতে পারিলে যদি তাহা হইতে

ইহার কোন উপায় হয়। রাজকন্যা স্বামী আজ্ঞানুসারে ভ্রাতা নিকট গমন করিয়া আপন স্বামীর স্থানে গুপ্তে আনয়ন করিলেন রায় সবিনয়েতে বেওরা বিদিত করিলে রাজকুমার চিন্তিত হইয়া কহিলেন ইহার আর কিছু উপায় দেখিতেছি না। কেবল একটা সুগতিক হইয়াছে।

অদ্য এই রাত্রে খুল্লপিতামহের বাটীতে নাচ দেখিবার অনুরোধ আছে তাহাতে আমার যাওয়া আবশ্যক ইহাতে যদিত তুমি কিছু কঠিন কর্ম্মে শক্ত হইতে পারহ তবে আমি এ সঙ্কট হইতে মুক্তা করিতে পারি। রায় হর্ষ হইয়া কহিলেন কহ কি কঠিন কার্য্য অদ্য আমি যে বিপদগ্রস্ত যে কোন কর্ম্মে আমার উপকার দর্শে তাহাতেই আমি শক্ত। রাজপুত্র কহিলেন তোমার পালকি কাঁন্ধে লইতে হবে না কিন্তু তুমি গতি কর আমার অঞ্চলে পরিচ্ছদান্বিত হও আমার মশালচির পরিচ্ছদে। তবে দেবতা যাহা করুন।

রায় প্রাণের রক্ষার্থে রাজকুমারের মতাবলম্বি হইয়া সওয়ারির সমিভ্যারে মশাল ধরিয়া প্রস্থান করিলেন এই এই মতে এ দুর্গম হইতে পরিত্রাণ হইয়া অতিক্রত আপন আমাত্য সমুদয় নৌকা আরোহিয়া ঐ রাত্রে খোস্তা কাটির নালা মুথল করিয়া মরিচাপ নদিতে নৌকা দিলে প্রফুল্ল হইয়া এককালিন তোব ও বন্দুকের দেহড় ও নাকারা ইত্যাদিতে ডঙ্কা দিলে শব্দানুসারে রাজা প্রতাপাদিত্যে চৈতন্ন পাইয়া প্রহরির দিগকে জিজ্ঞাসা করিলেন কি শব্দ শুনা যায়। তর্ত্ত কর। বুঝি রামচন্দ্র প্রস্থান করিল।[1]

In addition to its being the first piece of history in Bengali, the work has an intrinsic interest of its own to the student of literature. The curious style, in which it is written, with its quaintness, its crude orthography and syntax and its tendency towards Persian, has been the subject of much adverse criticism; but considered in the light of literary history it reveals to us certain aspects of the development of prose style in the beginning of the last century. The writer[2] in the *Calcutta Review* of 1850 characterises this style as a

1 রাজা প্রতাপাদিত্যচরিত্র, pp. 130-35: pp. 54-56.

2 The writer was James Long himself. See *Cal. Rev.* 1850, p. 134, Art. "Early Bengali Literature and Newspapers".

"kind of mosaic, half Persian, half Bengali" indicating "the pernicious influence which the Mahamadans had exercised over the Sanscrit-derived languages of India"; and this view has been endorsed by J.Long, who in his *Descriptive Catalogue* (1855) speaks of the book as "a work the style of which, a kind of mosaic, shewed how much unjust ascendancy of the Persian language had in that day corrupted the Bengali". Haraprasad Sastri, in one of his lectures[1], condemned the book as "disgusting unreadable" on account of its style. It cannot be denied indeed that the style *is* "a kind of mosaic"—a curious admixture of Bengali and Persian—quaint, affected and involved ; and considered from the standpoint of purity, lucidity or simplicity, its style is the worst that this period has to show in Bengali prose. It is true that Persian words occur more or less in every writing of this period, and we have seen from Carey's *Dialogues* published only a month after the book under review, Persian words preponderated especially in the colloquial language of a certain class of people ; but no other publication of this period is so much disfigured by Persian and Urdu words as Rām Basu's *Pratāpāditya-charitra.* The following extracts taken at random will bear out the above statement ;

যেকালে দিল্লির তক্তে হোমাঙু বাদসাহ্ তখন ছোলেমান ছিলেন কেবল বঙ্গ ও বেহারের নবাব পরে হোমাঙু বাদসাহের ওফাত হইলে হেন্দোস্তানে বাদসাহ হইতে ব্যাজ হইল এ কারণ হোমাঙু ছিলেন বৃহত গোষ্ঠী তাহার অনেক গুনিল (গুলিন) সন্তান তাহারদের আপনারদের মধ্যে আত্মকলহ হইয়া বিস্তর বিস্তর ঝকড়া লড়াই কাজিয়া উপস্থিত ছিল ইহাতে স্বাজাতের

1 *Lecture on Bengali Literature in the Present Century* (in Bengali), at the Sabitri Library (Published in *Bańgadarśan*, vol. vii and viii, 1287-88 B.S.). He uses the words "অপাঠ্য কদর্য্য" in connexion with this work, which appellations, however, are rather too strong. It is a significant fact that William Yates in his Selection from Bengali Literature of this period (*Introduction to the Bengali Language*, 1847, vol. ii) does not quote a single extract from *Pratāpāditya-charitra*, for its style seems to have been regarded as not worth study or attention.

তহশিল তাগদা কিছু হইয়াছিল না (p. 6-7; p. 2)। সে স্থানে লোক পাঠাইয়া দরোবস্ত জঙ্গল কাটাইলেন ও নদী নালার উপর স্থানে স্থানে পুলবন্দি করাইয়া রাস্তার নমূদ করিলেন......চতুঃপার্শ্বে গোলাগঞ্জ সহর বাজার নগর চাতর ও বাগ বাগিচা (p. 18; p. 7)। পাঁচ লক্ষ সামন্ত দিল্লি গের্দ্দে ছিল সমস্ত আনয়ন করিয়া হুকুম হইল গৌড়ে চড়াই করিতে ও দাউদের শিরচ্ছেদন করিতে (p. 22; p. 9)। তোড়লমল এই সমস্ত দেখিয়া নিরোপায়ক্রমে বিমর্শ হইয়া হজুর এত্লা কারণ বেওরা পুরস্করে আরজদাস্ত করিলে বাদসাহ মহারোষান্বিত সেনাতে সাজনিঘোষণ ডঙ্কা দিতে হুকুম করিলেন (p. 22; p. 9)। দাউদ আপনার দরোবস্ত সেনাগণ উত্তর পশ্চিম ভাগে পাঠাইয়া স্থানে স্থানে মুরচাবন্দি করিয়া সতৎ সাবধানে রহিয়াছে p. 21; p. 8)। এথায় বাদসাহি লস্কর সেনাপতি রাজা তোড়লমল ও রাজা ওমরাও সিংহ এই দুই সেনাপতি সর্ব্বসৈন্য লইয়া দাউদের থানা বথানায় রঞ্জিত হইয়া বেগগতি লুট ফশাদ করিতে সর্ব্বত্র জয়ী হইয়া রাজমহলের কেল্লাতে দাখিল হইলেন (pp. 28-29; p. 11)। সুবা জাতের কাগজজাতও কিছু পাইলেন না যে তাহাতে এ তিন সুবার উসুল তহসিল সুমার তফসিল ওয়াকিফ হওন (p. 29; p. 12)। ইহাতে দুই ভ্রাতা খাতির জমা হইয়া গেল রাজারদের সহিত ও নজর দিয়া সাখ্যাত করিলে তাহারা বিস্তর সম্মান করিল দুই ভ্রাতাকে খেলাত দিয়া খাতিরদারিতে সে দিবস বাসায় বিদায় করিল তাহারদিগকে (pp. 32-32; p. 13)। তৎপরে প্রতাপাদিত্য যাইয়া চতুর্থমাসে দিল্লিতে পৌছিলে উকিলেরা পূর্ব্বে সমাচার পাইয়া দিব্য এক অট্টালিকা মেরামত করিয়া রাখিয়াছিল তাহাতে বাসা হইল কএকদিন পরে বিস্তর বিস্তর তহফা আদি দিয়া বাদসাহের হজুরে দরপেস হইলেন (p. 60; p. 25)। It must be borne in mind, however, that at the time when the first Bengali prose works were written, Persian and Urdu, as the languages of the Court[1] and the market-place, were extensively studied and works in those languages were taken as models of composition in Bengali. Sanskrit was chiefly confined to the exclusive class of learned Brah-

1 It was abolished as a Court-language in 1836.

mans and curious scholars. Not only Persian and Urdu were learnt by the boys at school together with their mother-tongue, but even in ordinary conversation Persian words were extensively used. Six centuries of Muhammedan rule did not affect in any remarkable degree the manners and customs of the people, but they succeeded in throwing the vernacular into the shade and strengthening the supreme authority of Persian and Arabic, from whose rich vocabulary the Bengali language had been borrowing ever since. Even up to the time of Rāmmohan, when the tendency to Sanskritised style was gradually growing into favour, the Persian ideal was not wholly discarded. Rāmmohan himself wrote his earliest work in Persian but he was also a profound scholar of Sanskrit, and his later Bengali style was therefore more sanskritised. Rām Rām Basu, however, in spite of Carey's tribute to his knowledge of Sanskrit, seems never to have possessed that command over the language which his friend Rāmmohan certainly did. But Rām Rām Basu's mastery over Persian and Arabic, which seem to have been his favourite subjects, was undoubted. Moreover, Rām Rām Basu, as we have pointed out, distinctly says at the beginning of his book that he has based his work upon certain historical treatises in Persian. It may be observed that in the description of wars and court affairs, the language of the day could not avoid a certain inevitable admixture of Persian. Rāmmohan's subject-matter was religion, and his text the Sanskrit Śāstras ; Rām Rām Basu's interest, on the other hand, was in history and the Persian manuscripts constituted his authorities. As a result, therefore, it was quite natural that in his composition, Persian should have so much influence. Towards the end of *Pratāpāditya-charitra*, however, and in the description of domestic or emotional matters, Rām Rām Basu has avoided foreign aid and turned naturally to Sanskritised language in order to attain more vernacular ease. In the following passage on the celebrated episode of Basanta Rāy's murder, as well as the description of the flight of Rāmchandra quoted above, it

will be seen that the number of Persian words are comparatively few:

রাজা প্রতাপাদিত্য কোনক্রমে হননের ছিদ্র পায় না রাজা বসন্ত রায়ের পিতার সাম্বৎসরিক শ্রাদ্ধের দিবসে অবারিতদ্বার পূর্ব্বাপর থাকে ইত্যপকাশে রাজা প্রতাপাদিত্য এক দিব্য তলোয়ার সঙ্গোপনে লইয়া যশহর পুরী প্রবেশ করিলে দেখে রাজা বসন্ত রায় স্নান করিতেছেন ইহাতে বেগে গতি করিয়া আইসেন। এই সময়ে খানসামা বলিল রাজাকে মহারাজ রাজা প্রতাপাদিত্য বেগে আসিতেছেন। ইহাতে তিন ত্রস্ত হইয়া বলিলেন গঙ্গাজল আন। তাহারর্থ গঙ্গাজল নাম তলোয়ার। খানসামা তাহা না বুঝিয়া এক বাটীতে করিয়া গঙ্গাজল উপস্থিত করিল ইহা দেখিয়া বুঝিলেন পরমায়ু এই পর্য্যন্ত। ইতিমধ্যে রাজা প্রতাপাদিত্য অতিবেগে নিকটস্থ হইয়া তাহার শিরচ্ছেদন করিলে মুণ্ড ভুমিতলে পতন হইল ইহাতে অতিশয় কলরব এবং হাহাকার শব্দ হইল। (pp. 137-38; pp. 57-58).

Moreover, *Pratāpāditya-charitra* was the first attempt at sustained Bengali prose-writing; and with no model before him, Rām Rām Basu had no other alternative than that of writing in the current language, which was itself a strange admixture of Bengali and Persian, in order that his work might easily appeal to all. What seems quaint and affected to us was quite natural to readers a century ago who were accustomed to such mixed or corrupted forms. We must make allowance for all these considerations; but after all is said it cannot be denied at least that the style of *Pratāpāditya* is one of the worst specimens of Bengali prose-writing even for this period.[1]

1 This work was rewritten in a more popular style by Hariś Chandra Tarkālaṅkār at the instance of Rev. James Long in 1853 and included in the Bengali Family Library Series (গার্হস্থ্য বাঙ্গালা পুস্তকাবলী). 2nd Edition 1856. It would be interesting to contrast the styles of these two works written at the interval of 50 years. Hariś Chandra's version is reprinted in N. Ray's edition.

RĀM RĀM BASU'S LIPIMĀLĀ

In *Lipimālā*, however, his next work[1] published in 1802, consisting of a collection of letters on various topics,[2] the influence of Persian is almost absent. The Preface to this work in Bengali, indicating its object and plan, will be found interesting:

সৃষ্টি স্থিতি প্রলয়কর্ত্তা জ্ঞানদ সিদ্ধিদাতা পরব্রহ্মের[3] উদ্দিশ্যে নত হইয়া প্রণাম ও প্রার্থনা করিয়া নিবেদন করা যাইতেছে।—

এ হেন্দুস্থান মধ্যস্থল বঙ্গদেশ কার্য্যক্রমে এ সময় অন্যোন্য দেশীয় ও উপদ্বীপীয় ও পর্ব্বতস্থ ত্রিবিধ লোক উত্তম মধ্যম অধম অনেক লোকের সমাগম হইয়াছে এবং অনেক অনেকের অবস্থিতি ও এইস্থানে এখন এস্থলের অধিপতি ইংলণ্ডীয় মহাশয়েরা তাহারা এদেশীয় চলন ভাষা অবগত নহিলে রাজক্রিয়াক্ষম হইতে পারেণ না ইহাতে তাহারদিগের আকিঞ্চন এখানকার চলন ভাষা ও লেখাপড়ার ধারা অভ্যাস করিয়া সর্ব্ববিধ কার্যক্ষমতাপন্ন হয়েন। এতদর্থে এ ভূমীয় যাবদীয় লেখাপড়ার প্রকরণ দুই ধারাতে গ্রন্থিত করিয়া লিপিমালা নাম পুস্তক রচনা করা গেল। প্রথম ধারা দুই তিন অধ্যায় তাহার প্রথমতো রাজাগণ অন্য রাজারদিগকে লেখেন তাহার প্রত্যুত্তরপূর্ব্বক দ্বিতীয় রাজাগণ আপন সচিবলোককে অনুজ্ঞা ও বিধি-ব্যবস্থাক্রমদান। ইতি প্রথমধারা। দ্বিতীয় ধারা সামান্য লেখাপড়া। সমান সমানীকে গুরু লঘুকে এবং লঘু গুরুকে প্রভু কর্ম্মকরকে এবং অঙ্কমালা এই মতে পুস্তক লেখা যাইতেছে। ইহাতে অন্যোন্য বিদ্বান লোকের স্থানে

1 The book gives a clue to its date. There is a couplet in the Preface which shows that it was composed in ভাদ্র ১২০৮. It runs thus:

শতাদিত্য বসু বর্ষ পঞ্চ শ্রেষ্ঠ মাস। পরম আনন্দে রাম করিল প্রকাশ ॥

2 There were altogether 40 letters in two sections (ধারা). The first section contains 15 letters (10 from one king to another রাজা অন্য রাজাকে + 5 from a king to his servant রাজা চাকরকে). The second section consists of 25 letters of a social character (e.g. father to son, superior person to inferior, equal to equal, master to servant, servant to master etc.).

3 This shows, according to some critics, the influence of Rāmmohan Rāy who taught the worship of "ব্রহ্ম". But this is a theory only.

আমার এই আকাঙ্ক্ষা যে যদি আমার রচিত এই পুস্তকের মধ্যে কদাচিত-ক্রমে কশ্চিত দোষ হইয়া থাকে তাহা অনুগ্রহপূর্ব্বক দৃষ্টিমাত্রে নিন্দামদে মত্ত না হয়েন এ কারণ কোন লোক দোষ ভিন্ন হইতে পারে না।[1]

The letters, however, are not all on business matters or domestic subjects, but some of them are in reality discourses on some religious, historical or legendary topics of interest. For instance, in the letter of one king to another we have, among other things, a discourse on the death of Parīkṣit with a moral on the impotence of human will; in the letter of a king to his subject, an account of Dakṣa-yajña: a son writing to his father gives a description of Nabadwīp and Chaitanya; a father instructs his son in the Paurāṇik account of Nārad and Parbat or of the descent of Bhāgīrathī; a teacher writing to his pupil answers some of the latter's questions about Rābaṇ and the legendary account of Baidyanāth. This work is really, as Buchanan describes it (*op. cit.* p. 228) "an original composition in Bengali prose in the epistolary form." All these descriptive letters are indeed interesting both in form and matter, but it is not possible to give here more than one quotation, on account of the length of the letters:

রাজা চাকরকে।[2]

অথ বিবরণঞ্চ বিশেষ তোমার ও অঞ্চলের মধ্যে মহাপীঠ জ্বালামুখ যে অতি চমতকৃত স্থান শুনিলাম সেখানকার সেবাদি এখন পূর্ব্বমত হয় না

1 লিপিমালা পুস্তক। রামরাম বসুর রচিত। শ্রীরামপুরে ছাপা হইল। ১৮০২। Lipimala or the Bracelet of Writing being a Series of Letters on Different Subjects by Ram Ram Boshoo, one of the Pundits in the College of Fort William. Serampore 1802, pp. 1-255. Also entered in the *Catalogue of the Library of the Hon. East India Company*, p. 295, with identical date and place of publication and name of the author. In Buchanan, *op. cit.*, it is described as "an original composition in Bengali prose in the epistolary form" and in *Primitae Orientales* as "Letters on business in the Bengali Language intended to facilitate transactions with the natives".

2 লিপিমালা, প্রথম ধারা; pp. 107-116. Some verses are here omitted at the beginning.

তোমার বড় একটা মনোযোগ সে বিষয় প্রতি নাই এ বড়ই বিরুদ্ধ কথা আমি বুঝি তুমি তাহাতে জ্ঞাত নহ অতএব সে বিবরণ লেখিতেছি মনোযোগ করিবা। মহাদেব বিবাহ করেন দক্ষের দুহিতা মহাশক্তি অবতীর্ণা দক্ষের গৃহে তাহার নাম সতী। দক্ষ মহাব্যক্তি প্রজাপতি ব্রহ্মার মানসপুত্র শব (শিব) তাহার যামাতা বটে কিন্তু ইনি অনাদি কত কোটি ব্রহ্মা ইহার আজ্ঞাবহ তাহাতে দক্ষ কোন ব্যক্তি তাহার পূর্ব্বসাধনাক্রমে মহাশক্তি ভগবতী তাহার কন্যারূপে অবতীর্ণা হইলেন সেই কথা মহাশক্তি তিনি মহাদেবের শক্তি। মহাদেব দক্ষকে শ্বশুরভাবে প্রণাম করেন না ইহাতেই দক্ষ মহাদেবের প্রতি আনন্দিত কখন নহেন বরং কোপিত এবং কখন কুৎসা বাক্য মহাদেবের বিপরীতে কহেন। এই মত কতক কাল গত হয়। এক সময় ভৃগু মহামুনি যজ্ঞে ত্রিভুবণ নিমন্ত্রণ হইলে সমস্ত দেবগণের আগমন দক্ষ প্রজাপতি ইত্যাদি সমস্তই সভাস্থ এইকালে মহাদেবের আগমনে সকলেই উত্থান করিয়া অভ্যর্থনা করিলে প্রজাপতি দক্ষ অহঙ্কারে অহঙ্কৃত হইয়া মহাদেবের প্রণাম না করাতে উত্থান করিলেন না এবং আলাপও না করিয়া অন্য লোকের সহিত শিবনিন্দায় প্রবর্ত্ত সেই হইতে দক্ষের দ্বেষ বিদ্বেষ এবং শিবনিন্দা সদা পরে দক্ষ মহাকোপে নিজালয় যাইয়া আপনি যজ্ঞারম্ভ করিলেন বিবেচনা এই যে আমার যজ্ঞে মহাদেবের নিমন্ত্রণ করিব না ইহাতেই তাহার অপমান হইবেক এই মতে যজ্ঞারম্ভ করিয়া সমস্ত আহ্বান করিলেন মহাদেব তাহার যামাতা তাহার কন্যা মহাশক্তি সতী শিবের ঘরণী তথাচ তাহার প্রতি দৃষ্টি না করিয়া রোষযুক্তে সমস্তই বিস্মৃতি কন্যা কি যামাতা কাহাকেও নিমন্ত্রণ করিলেন না। এই মতে দক্ষের যজ্ঞ হইতেছে ইতিমধ্যে সতী পিতৃগৃহে উৎসব শুনিয়া উৎকণ্ঠ চিত্ত হইয়া অত্যন্ত কাতরা সতী নিবেদন করিতেছেন মহাদেব প্রভো পিতৃগৃহে মহোৎসব আমার চিত্ত একান্ত ব্যাকুল হইয়াছে পিতৃগৃহে যাইতে ইচ্ছা দেখ প্রাণনাথ চিরকাল গত হইল মঙ্গল সূত্র করে তোমার ঘরে আসিয়াছি পরে কখন পিতৃগৃহে যাই নাই এবং মাতাপিতাকে দেখি নাই আমি আমার মাতার কন্যা মাতা আমাকে বড় ভাল বাসেন আমিও সেই মত আমার ইচ্ছা পিতৃগৃহে যাইতে তুমি আজ্ঞা কর (some verses are omitted here)। একথা কহিয়া

মহাদেবের চরণে ধরিয়া সাধনা করিলে মহাদেব বিমর্ষ চিত্তে কহিতেছেন শুন তোমার পিতা পাষণ্ড আমাকে মানে না দেখ সে আমাকে অমান্য করিবার নিমিত্ত আমাকে নিমন্ত্রণ করিল না বিনা নিমন্ত্রণে তুমি গেলে সন্মান পাবা না এবং আমার নিন্দাতে তোমার দুখ হইবেক পশ্চাত তাহার বারণ হইবেক না। অতএব অনিমন্ত্রিত স্থানে যাওয়া উচিত নহে। সতী কহিতেছেন প্রাণনাথ আপনার মাতা পিতার নিমন্ত্রণ অনিমন্ত্রণে কি হয় তাহারদের কাছে পুত্র কন্যার সন্মান অসন্মান কি আমার পিতা আমাকে বড়ই ভালবাসেন আমি বুঝি আমার অসন্মান করিবেন না সতী যাওনের উদযুক্তা নিতান্ত শিবাজ্ঞা না নহিলে সতী ক্ষিপ্তমানা রোদন করিতে করিতে মহাক্রোধেতে ক্রোধিত হইয়া পদব্রজে গতি করিলে মহাদেব নন্দি মহাকাল সিব (শিব) সেবককে আজ্ঞা করিলে মহাকাল মহাযান লইয়া পশ্চাতবর্ত্তিতা করিয়া কতক দূরে গেল দেবী সে যানারোহণে দক্ষ্যালয় উপস্থিতি প্রসতী (প্রসূতী) সতী কন্যাকেই দৃষ্টমাত্রেই প্রেমানন্দে পুলকিত গদগদ চিত্তে যাইয়া কন্যার মুখচুম্বন করিয়া ক্রোড়ে করিয়া নৃত্য করিতে লাগিলেন এইমতে প্রেমাশক্ত সতীও মাতাকে প্রণাম করিয়া আর আর সমস্ত ভগিণী ও অমাত্যগণকে সম্ভাষ করিয়া যজ্ঞ স্থানে পিতার নিকটে যাইয়া প্রণাম করিলে দক্ষ তাহাকে দেখিবামাত্রেই হরকোপে কোপিত হইয়া শিব নিন্দায় প্রবর্ত্ত হইল। কহিল কন্যে তুমি কিমর্থে এখানে আসিয়াছ তোমার স্বামী ভূতের পতি শ্মশান মসানে তাহার অবস্থিতি হাড়মালা গলায় সাপ লইয়া তাহার খেলা বাদিয়ার বেশ তোমার কপাল মন্দ অতএব এমত ঘটনা তোমাকে হইয়াছে আমি তাহাকে নিমন্ত্রণ করিলাম না। এ দেবসভা আমি ব্রহ্মার পুত্র বাদিয়ার নিমন্ত্রণ দেবসভায় হইতে পারে না। সতী কহিলেন পিতা এমত কুৎসা মহাদেবের প্রতি কহ কেন মহাদেব দেবদেব ব্রহ্মা বিষ্ণু ইত্যাদি যাহার পদযুগে শরণাগত যে হর মহাবীর ত্রিপুরাসুরকে সংহার করিলেন যে হর কালকূট পান করিয়া সৃষ্টি রক্ষা করিলেন তাহাকে কুৎসাবাক্য তোমা ব্যতিরেক কেহ কহে না তুমি এ অনুচিত ক্রিয়া কেন কর। নন্দি কহিল দক্ষ নিন্দার প্রতিফল পাইবা যে মুখে শিবনিন্দা করিলা তাহা তোমার নাশ হইয়া ছাগল বদন হইবেক এ সকল

বাক্যে দক্ষ পুনর্ব্বার শিবনিন্দা করিতে প্রবর্ত্ত হইলে সতী মহাক্রোধে উত্থান করিয়া কহিতেছেন পিতা সকলের উপযুক্ত গুরুনিন্দাশ্রবণে লোক নিন্দকের শির ছেদন করিবেক নতুবা নিজ প্রাণত্যাগ করিবেক কিম্বা সে স্থান ত্যাগ করিবেক আমি আপন প্রাণ ত্যাগ করিব তোমার আত্মজা তনু আর রাখিব না এই কহিয়া বসন আটিয়া পরিয়া যাইয়া মধ্যস্থানে বসিয়া শিবরূপ ধ্যানে প্রাণত্যাগ করিলেন। সভার মধ্যে দানাগণে কোলাহল করিলে দক্ষ তাহারদিগকে মারিয়া খেদিয়া দিল। নন্দি দানাগণ সমুদায় লইয়া রোদন করিতে করিতে শিবসাক্ষাৎ নিবেদন করিবামাত্রেই মহাদেব ক্রোধাবিষ্ট শিবের লোমাঞ্চিত হইতে হইতে মহাক্রোধাবেশ কালান্তকানল সম হইয়া মস্তক হইতে এক জটা ছেদন করিয়া ফেলিলেই তাহাতে মহাবীর বীরভদ্র উতপন্ন হইলেন বীরের মস্তক গগনে স্পর্শ করিলেক মহাদর্পবান বীর দুই চক্ষু রক্তবর্ণ সদা ক্রোধযুক্ত জন্মিবামাত্রেই করপুটে নিবেদন করিলেন দেবদেব আমি কি কর্ম্ম করিব। শিব কহিলেন দক্ষকে সংহার করহ এবং নষ্ট কর তাহার যজ্ঞ আজ্ঞানুসারে বীর সাতকোটি দানা সহিত সজ্জযান হইয়া ক্ষণমাত্রেই দক্ষালয় উত্তরিয়া নখেতে দক্ষের মুণ্ড ছেদন করিয়া যজ্ঞকুণ্ডে সমর্পণ করিলেন এবং দানাগণে প্রস্রাব করিয়া যজ্ঞকুণ্ড পরিপূর্ণ করিল ব্রাহ্মণকে পুথির রজ্জু দিয়া কর বন্ধ করিয়া নানা মত দুর্নীতি করিল কাহার শ্মশ্রু উৎপাটন করে কাহার দন্ত ভাঁগিয়া ফেলে এই মত অবস্থা সকলকে করিয়া যজ্ঞ নাশীয়া যাইয়া নিবেদন করিল চন্দ্রচূড়ের সন্নিধানে। পরে মহাদেব সতী অঙ্গ দর্শনার্থে দক্ষের ভবনে উপস্থিত হইয়া সতীর মৃতাঙ্গ মস্তকে করিয়া নৃত্যে করিতে প্রবর্ত্ত এই মতে মহাদেব নৃত্য পৃথিবী ভারাক্রান্ত হইয়া আর সহিষ্ণুতা করিতে পারিলেন না ব্যস্ত সমস্ত হইয়া ব্রহ্মার গোচর নিবেদন করিলে ব্রহ্মা কহিলেন বিষ্ণু ব্যতিরেক ইহার উপায় আমাদিয়া কিছু হইতে পারে না। পরে বিষ্ণুর স্তব করিয়া কহিলেন প্রভো পৃথিবী আর ভার সহিতে পারে না এই মতে ব্রহ্মা বিষ্ণু সেই যজ্ঞস্থানে যাইয়া বিবিধ প্রকারে মহাদেবের স্তব করিয়া বিষ্ণু চক্রেতে সতী অঙ্গ ছেদন করিতে করিতে সামুদায়িক ছেদন হইয়া খণ্ড খণ্ড হইয়া পতন হইল। সাকল্যে একান্ন ভাগ হইয়া একান্ন স্থানে পতন হইল সেই একান্ন স্থান হইল পৃথক পৃথক এক এক

পীঠস্থান তাহাতে মহাশক্তির এক এক রূপ এবং এক এক ভৈরব অধিষ্ঠান চূড়ামণি তন্ত্রে তাহার বিশেষণ গিয়াছে অতএব এমত মহাস্থান তাহার সেবাচর্য্যা প্রকৃত মত করিবা তাহার ইত্যাদির উপর অতিক্রম করিবা না। সাবধান ইতি।

But the language of the strictly business letters are not so commendable and the contrast is noticeable. We select here two characteristic specimens even at the risk of being lengthy.

(১) লঘু পোষ্য গুরুকে।[1]

প্রণামা বিজ্ঞাপনঞ্চ তদ্বিশেষঃ তবাশিষ অত্রানন্দ পরং। ওখানকার সমাচার অনেক দিবস না পাইয়া একান্ত ভাবিত ছিলাম এখন শ্রীজয়-গোপাল ঘোষের হাতপাত্র (হাতপত্র) পাইয়া সমস্ত সমাচার জ্ঞাত হইয়া নিশ্চিন্ত হইলাম। লিখিয়াছ আপনকার কন্যার বিবাহের সম্বন্ধ শ্রীযুত রাজনারয়ণ (নারায়ণ) রায়ের পুত্রের সহিত হইয়াছে তাহার কুলমর্য্যদা (মর্য্যাদা) একশত টাকা দিতে হইবেক এ সম্বন্ধ ভাল বটে কিন্তু টাকার সাংগত্য বৃহত ব্যাপার এইক্ষণে তাহার সংস্থান কি একশত টাকা পণ দিতে হইবেক তদ্ভিন্ন আপনারদের ব্যায় তিন চারিশত টাকা ন্যূনে হইতে পারিবেক না তাহার সকল সঙ্গতি এইক্ষণে হইতে পারিবেক না। আমার এখান হইতে একশত টাকার সুসার হইতে পারিবেক ইহার অধিক কপর্দ্দক হইবে না বক্রি চারশত অন্য কোন স্থানে হইতে সঙ্গতি করিতে পার এমত স্থান আমি দেখিতে পাই না অতএব সুতরাং এ সম্বন্ধ এইক্ষণে হইতে পারিল না তবে যদি কোন স্থান হইতে টাকার সাংগত্য করিতে পরেণ (পারেন) তবে প্রবর্ত্ত হইবেন পশ্চাত এ টাকা আমি পাঠাইয়া দিব তাহার ভাবনা কিছু করিবা না। শ্রীযুত রাজা মহাশয় আদ্য তিন দিবস হইল ফলানা পরগণায় যাত্রা করিয়াছেন আমিও দুই এক দিনের মধ্যে যাত্রা করিব সে স্থানে যাইয়া কার্য্যে না প্রবর্ত্ত হইলে টাকার সকল সাংগত্য কি প্রকারে হয় কিন্তু পশ্চাত হওনের বাধ হইবে না যদি এ সম্বন্ধ মাসেক দুইমাস পরে হয় কোন ব্যামোহ হয় না শ্রীযুত কৃষ্ণ রায় মহাশয়কে লিখিতেছি এ

[1] লিপিমালা, দ্বিতীয় ধারা, pp. 163-166.

সম্বন্ধ এইক্ষণে না হইয়া পশ্চাত আগ্রহায়নাদিতে হয় তিনি এমত করিয়া দিবেন। শ্রীযুত রামসুন্দর বসুজাকে আশ্বীনাদিতে সে স্থানে পাঠাইবেন এক আদ কার্য্য অবশ্য করিয়া দিতে পারিব আমাকে সাহেবের নিতন্ত (নিতান্ত) অনুগ্রহ আছে ইহাতে যখন যাহা সাহেবকে কহি তাহা প্রামাণ্য করেন কার্য্য অতি বড় হইয়াছে ইহাতে যদি কিছু কাল এই কার্য্যে নির্বিঘ্নেতে থাকিতে পারি তবে ঈশ্বরেচ্ছা যথেষ্ঠ লোকের প্রতিপালন হইতে পারিবে। সংপ্রতি এক কার্য্য উপস্থিত আছে বড় মন্দ নহে বসুজাকে যদি শীঘ্র পাঠাইতে পারেণ তবে ইহাতেই প্রবর্ত্ত করিয়া দিতে পারি নতুবা ঈশ্বরীপূজার সময় আমি বাটী আসিব সাক্ষাৎ সমস্ত কহিয়া শুনিয়া পরামর্শপূর্ব্বক যাহা হয় করিব কিন্তু ইহার মধ্যে যদি কোন আবশ্যক হয় তবে আপনি এ পর্য্যন্ত আসিবেন বিশেষ বিদিত হইয়া যাহা কর্ত্তব্য তাহার চেষ্টাচরিত্র করা যাইবেক কিম্বা আর কোন কৌশলে কার্য্য চলে তবে তাহাই করিব। শ্রীযুত রাম-গোবিন্দ রায় মহাশয় এখানে আসিয়াছিলেন অদ্য দুই দিবস হইল বারানশী প্রস্থান করিয়াছেন তাহার পত্র এখানে ছিল তাহা পাঠাইতেছি শীঘ্র তাহার বাটীতে পাঠাইয়া দিবেন আমি তাহাকে একশত টাকা পথি ব্যায় নিমিত্ত দিয়া শ্রীযুত রামানন্দ বাবুর সহিত পাঠাইয়াছি পাটনা পর্য্যন্ত সচ্ছন্দ পৌশিতে পারিবেন সেখান হইতে বাবু সাতি সঙ্গতি করিয়া দিবেন সেজন্য কোন ভাবনার বিষয় নহে। এ সকল সমাচার তাহারদিগের বাটীতে আপনি যাইয়া বিশেষ বিশেষণ করিয়া কহিবেন বাটীর কেহ ব্যস্ত না হয়েন যাতায়াতে মঙ্গলাদি লিখিবেন। কিমধিকমিতি।

(২) রাজা অন্য রাজাকে।[1]

ইদানীন্ত পবিত্রপুর পরগণায় আপনকার পিতামহ বাপীখননেতে দৈবক্রমে কতগুলি ধনপ্রাপ্ত হইয়াছিলেন। তখন রাজাধিরাজ তার প্রতি মনো-যোগ করিলেন না কিন্তু হিরামন মাত্র ধন প্রাপ্যকে আক্রমণ করিয়াছিল। এপর্য্যন্ত প্রসঙ্গ হইলে তাহার বারণ হইল তথাচ সে ব্যক্তি বহুমতে মন্ত্রীগণের

1 লিপিমালা, প্রথম ধারা, pp. 32-37. Some verses are omitted by us at the beginning. The extracts contain numerous *disjecta membra poetae*. To this letter there is an equally strong reply which want of space forbids us to quote.

মনোরঞ্জনা করিয়া স্বপদে স্থায়ী হইল। সেই ধনোপলক্ষ্যে তাহার পুত্র কএকজন সেনা সংগ্রহ করিয়া শিরসী পরগণার রাজা নিঃসন্তান বিয়োগ হইলে তাহার কিঞ্চিত অধিকার কার্য্যক্রমে সেনার প্রতারণাবশে অন্যায় ক্রিয়া করিয়া তিঁহ অধিকার করিয়াছিলেন। পিতা হইতে পুত্র ভাগ্যবন্ত ও ক্ষমতাপন্ন ছিল বটে তথাচ এই দ্বারের অপেক্ষিক কখন অহঙ্কারে মত্ত হইতেন না। এবং অন্যের হিংসাহীন ছিলেন এখন শুনি আপনি দৈবপরাক্রান্ত লোক দান শৌর্য্য কীর্ত্তি বীর্য্য রাজ্য সম্পদে মহা অহঙ্কৃত এবং দেবীসীমার চর যাহা চির-কালাবধি এ মহারাজ্যভুক্ত শিরসীর সহিত তাহার কোন অংশাংশী নাই তথাচ আপনকার ইচ্ছা নিজ পরাক্রমে তাহা অধিকার করেণ একি আশ্চর্য্য ভাল ভাল এও ভাল আপনকার এমত এমত পরাক্রম হইল এ একটা আনন্দের বিষয় বটে কিন্তু শুন কহি অবধান কর একি তুমি কোন মানুষ যে তুমি কটক পাঁচনী কর এ অঞ্চলের উপর এ তোমার কি প্রকার ইতর বিবেচনা কোথা শুনিয়াছ শুনি আহারে শার্দ্দুল স্থকিত হও। এ সামান্য বিষয় প্রযুক্ত এখানকার কোপের বাহুল্য হয় না শৃগালের গর্জ্জনে কেশরী নাহি রোষে যদিতু হইল তবে তোমার কি গতিক হইবে কোথায় যাইবা তোমার সহায় বা কে এবং রক্ষা বা কে করিতে পারে। এখানকার ক্রোধ যদি হয় তবে প্রতি ইন্দ্রসখা করিলেও না পাবে রক্ষা বৈরিদম্য সেনা মোর যদ্যপি কোপে সসৈন্যেতে সংহার করিবে। সকুটুম্বে সাবধান আপনার পিতৃপিতামহের সুখ্যা-তিতে সুখ্যাতান্বিত হইয়া কোন ক্রমে দিনপাত করিতেছ ইহাতে বিরস কেন হয় এখানকার সহিত প্রতিযোগিতা করিয়া তুমি কি স্থির করিবা। নিসদাধিপ রাজা বলবন্ত রায় যাহার অসঙ্খ্যা সেনা এবং দর্পমান কত বড় তাহার পরাক্রমের সীমা কি যমসম বৈরী হৈলে দৃষ্টে করে ভেদ। যাহার রাজ্য পঞ্চবিংশতি দিবসের পথবিস্তার সেনার কোলাহল সিন্ধুগর্জ্জনপ্রায় এমত মহারাজা নরপরী নগরের আশে যাহা পূর্ব্বে তাহার কখন ছিল কি কিমত আপন শক্তি আক্রান্ত করিয়া রণ করিল বৎসরাবধি সে বিরোধ উপস্থিত ছিল। যখন বৈরীদম্য সেনা আপনারদের পরাক্রমে দণ্ডায়মান হইলে সহজে বলবন্তকে সংহার করিয়া এবং তাহার প্রতিবাদী যে কেহ আসিয়া হইল সমস্তকে নিবারণ করিল জয় জয়কারধ্বনি সর্ব্বত্র ব্যাপক করাইল।

এখন সে নিসাদরাজ্য এ অধিকারভুক্ত ইহাতে তোমার একি বুদ্ধি শিবা হইয়া কর বাদ সিংহের সহিত তুমি কাঙ্যালে এ প্রযুক্ত তোমাকে কহি সাবধান সাবধান এমত দুঃসাহস আর কখন করিও না। তুমি দীন এখানকার লেখায় দরিদ্র সহায়হীন তোমার উচিত যদি দেবীসীমার চরে তোমার সেনার গমন হইয়া থাকে ইহাতে সেখানকার প্রজারদের যে কিছু ক্ষেতি হইয়া থাকে তাহার দ্বিগুণ করিয়া দিয়া তাহারদিগকে পরিতোষ করহ যাহাতে তাহারা এ পর্য্যন্ত আন্দোলন না করে। তাহা হইলে রক্ষা পাওয়া ভার। যাহা হউক। এমত এমত করিয়া সবান্ধববর্গে ও সসৈন্যে একত্র হইয়া বৈরিদম্য সেনার সাধনা করিলে বুঝি রক্ষা হইতে পারে বা। এ কারণ ক্ষীণ হীন দীন অকিঞ্চন লোকের ব্যামোহেতে আমার অন্তর সদা কাতর এবং স্তবের বশ অতএব ইহাই কর কহি শুন যদি তোমার ভাগ্যোদয় ক্রমে জ্ঞানের বাহুল্য হয় তবেই সে তোমার রক্ষা নতুবা নয়। কিন্তু যদি দুষ্টমতি তোমার প্রকৃতির সখা হইয়া থাকে তবে আর হিতোপদেশের আবশ্যক নাই সৈন্য সাজনা বাহির হইয়া সমাচার লিখিলেই বৈরিদম্য প্রস্তুত হবেক। ইহার যাহাতে অভিরুচি কিন্তু অদ্যই দেবীসীমা হইতে লোক উঠাইয়া লহ তাহার বিক্ষণ গৌণ করিবা না। তোমার দশা গৌড়াধিপ ও একব্বর সাহের মত হবেক উপায় কি ইতি।

As we have already remarked, the prevalence of Persian words, which is so conspicuous a feature of the *Pratāpāditya-charitra*, has almost disappeared in this publication. There is a marked tendency towards the use of Sanskrit words, but at the same time, in spite of elaborate superscription[1] like অনন্যগতিক পোষ্যস্য পরশুভাশী নিবেদনঞ্চ বিশেষঃ মহাশয়ের অতুলোন্নত রাজলক্ষ্মী নিয়ত প্রার্থনয়া তত্র নির্ব্বৃতিপরং", the style is not laboured or pedantic like that of some other Pundits of the College. In this Rām Rām Basu was proving himself a true disciple of Carey from whom he learned to make the best use of the popular language and avoid academic affectation of laboured

1 p. 185. But simpler superscription too, e.q., প্রাণপ্রতিম শ্রীযুক্ত অমুক পরম কল্যাণবরেষু (p. 191). But these are mere matters of form.

style. The syntax and orthography, however, are still imperfect, although there is a great improvement indeed upon those of *Pratāpāditya-charitra.*

GOLAKNĀTH ŚARMĀ: HIS HITOPADEŚA, 1801

A better specimen of easy prose-writing is to be found in Golaknāth Śarmā's translation of *Hitopadeśa*[1], noticeable if not for its matter certainly for its form. Of Golaknāth's personal history not much is known. His name appears to have been Golaknāth Mukhopādhyāy. He was resident in some place near Mahīpāla-dighi (in Dinajpur district). He was connected with the Missionaries from 1794. When Carey left Maldah and came to Serampore Golaknāth also came

1 হিতোপদেশ। সংগ্রহ ভাষাতে। গোলকনাথ শর্ম্মণা ক্রিয়তে। শ্রীরামপুরে ছাপা হইল। ১৮০১ ; Heetopadeshu or Beneficial Instructions Translated from the original Sungskrit by Goluknath Pundit. Serampore. Printed at the Mission Press, 1802. pp. 1-147. Yates in his Selection (*Intro. to Bengali Language*, vol. ii) does not quote from this work but from the version of Mṛtyuñjay. Yates himself published a translation of *Hitopadeśa* in 1848. Besides Mṛtyuñjay Bidyālaṅkār's version, there is another version published in 1830 in Sanskrit, Bengali and English (editions in 1844, 1848, 1860 and 1880) by Lakṣmīnārāyaṇ Nyāyalaṅkār, Librarian to the College of Fort William (afterwards Sudder Ameen) and C. Wilkins (Long, *Return of Names* etc., p. 133. Also in Blumhardt, *op. cit.* p. 115-116). A copy of Goloknāth Śarmā's version is in the library of the British Museum bearing the same date and place of publication as we have given above (Blumhardt, *op. cit.* p. 115). Seton-Karr in his article on Bengali Literature in *Cal. Rev.* 1849 (p. 499) is rather severe in his criticism on this work ; but his views were formed, it seems, on the "condensed and corrected" specimens from this work given in Yates's *Introduction*, vol. ii (1847) ed. by Wenger. The work under review is entered as Goloknāth's and dated 1801 in the *Catalogue of the Library of the Hon. East India Company*, 1845, p. 195. The date 1802, given in the *Tenth Memoir*, is inaccurate ; but it follows the date given on the English title-page of the book (the Bengali title-page giving the date 1801).—for Goloknāth see Brajendranath Banerji, ফোর্ট উইলিয়ম কলেজের পণ্ডিত under the heading of his name.

with him. Golaknāth died in 1803. His *Hitopadeś* was published before *Lipimālā* but about the same time as *Pratāpāditya-charitra* ; yet it displays great superiority of language and manner. It is a pretty close but easy translation of the four books of the well-known moral essay—unabridged and unexpurgated—and the prose is plain and unassuming, except for a little quaintness smacking of the *ṭol* pundit and a little irregularity of syntax here and there. Although itself based upon a Sanskrit original and the author himself a learned Pundit, well-versed, it may be, in the classical language, there is yet no trace of any affectation of pedantry or magnificence. The style is free also from the Persian influence so conspicuous in Rām Rām Basu's works. There is some attempt at periodic prose, but the syntax and arrangement, imitating commentorial queerness, is not all that could be desired, though it is certainly more correct and easy than that of *Pratāpāditya* or *Lipimālā*. With no conscious purpose of developing a prose style but with unconscious experiments at arrangement and adjustment, here is, as in Carey's *Dialogues* or *Itihās-māla*, much simplicity and desire to make the language clear and useful. There is hardly any necessity of quoting too many extracts, for the style, besides being plain and simple, has hardly any marked impressiveness of its own, The following extract will be found illustrative. It is taken from the beginning or introduction[1] where the Princes are introduced to Viṣṇuśarmā who begins teaching by narrating the stories.

AN EXTRACT FROM THE INTRODUCTION

সর্ব্বত্রে বিচিত্র কথা এবং নীতিবিদ্যাদায়িক সে কি মত তাহার বিশেষ কহি। পণ্ডিত যে ব্যক্তি সে বিদ্যার্থ কি মত চিন্তা করে তাহা শুন। অজরা অমরাবৎ আর ধর্ম্মাচরণ কেমন যেমত যমেতে কেশাকর্ষণ করিয়া থাকে তাদৃশ। অপর বিদ্যাবস্তু সকল দ্রব্যের মধ্যে অত্যুত্তম কহিয়াছেন তাহার

1 The story is well-known to require an analysis of its contents here.

কারণ এই অহরণীয় অমূল্য অপূর্ব্ব অংশির অধিকার নাহি ও চোরের অধিকার নাহি এবং দানেতেও ক্ষয় নাহি অতএব বিদ্যারত্ন মহাধন সংজ্ঞা। তাহার শক্তি কি কি বিদ্যা বিনয়দাতা বিনয় পাত্রদাতা পাত্র ধনদাতা ধন ধর্ম্ম ও সুখদাতা এ সকল বিষয় কহিলে পুস্তক বাহুল্য হয় অতএব সংক্ষেপে কিছু কিছু কহিব। সম্প্রতি মিত্রলাভ সুহৃদ্ভেদ বিগ্রহ সন্ধি। এই চারিভাগ।

কোন নদীর তীরেতে পাটলী পুত্র নামধেয় এক নগর আছে সে স্থানে সর্ব্বস্বামী গুণোপেত সুদর্শন নামে রাজা ছিল। সেই রাজা এককালে কোন কাহার মুখে পাঠ্যমান দুই শ্লোক শুনিলেন তাহার অর্থ এই শাস্ত্র সকলের লোচন অতএব যে শাস্ত্র না জানে সেই অন্ধ। আর যৌবন ধন সম্পত্তি প্রভুত্ব অবিবেক চতুষ্টয় ইহার যদি এক থাকে তবেই অনর্থ সমুদয় থাকিলে না জানি কি হয়। ইহা শুনিয়া সেই রাজা অত্যন্ত উদ্বিগ্ন মনে চিন্তা করিতে লাগিলেন যে আমার পুত্রেরা অতি মূর্খ অতএব ইহারদের কি হবে। এমন পুত্র থাকা না থাকা তুল্য। যে পুত্র অবিদ্যান ও অধার্ম্মিক সে পুত্রের কি কার্য্য যেমন কানার চক্ষুপীড়া মাত্র। যদি পুত্র হইয়া মরিত কিম্বা না হইত সে কেবল একবার দুঃখ কিন্তু মূর্খ পুত্র প্রতিপদে। বিদ্যাযুক্ত এবং সাধু যদি এক পুত্র হয় তিনি পুরুষের মধ্যে সিংহ। যেমন চন্দ্র। যাদৃশ রজনীতে চন্দ্র উদয় না হইলে কোটি কোটি নক্ষত্রে অন্ধকার নাশ করিতে পারে না তাদৃশ এক শত মূর্খ পুত্র জানিবা এক সুপুত্রের তুল্য নহে। অপর যে ব্যক্তি অনেক দান ও পুণ্য করে তাহার পুত্র ধনবান ও ধীবান ও ধার্ম্মিক হয়। ঋণ কর্ত্তা পিতা শত্রু মাতা অপ্রিয়-বাদিনী ভার্য্যা রূপবতী পুত্র অপণ্ডিত। উচ্চ বা নীচ হউক গুণবান সকল স্থানে পূজনীয়। যেমন বংশের গুণযুক্ত ধনুক নির্গুণ কি কার্য্যের। যে পুত্র না পাঠ করে সে পুত্র পণ্ডিতের মধ্যে কীদৃশ যেমন পঙ্কের মধ্যে গরু পড়িলে হয়। গর্ত্তস্থ মনুষ্যের এই পাঁচ যোগ হইয়া থাকে আয়ু কর্ম্ম বিত্ত বিদ্যা নিধন। কিন্তু যদি কেহ ভাবে যে যা হবার তা হবে সে অতি অলশের কথা তাহার প্রমাণ যেমত রথের গতি কেবল চক্রেতে হয় না এবং পুরুষ কারের চেষ্টা ব্যতিরেক হয় না। অপর কুম্ভকার আপন ইচ্ছামত তাহার কার্য্য করিতে পারে তাদৃশ আত্মকৃত কর্ম্ম মনুষ্যে করিতে

পারে। অপরঞ্চ কাকের তাল ফেলার ন্যায় অগ্রে নিধি দেখিয়া পায় তাহা ঈশ্বর দত্ত বটে কিন্তু পুরুষার্থ অপেক্ষা করে যদি কোন কাহার অগ্রে পাকা তাল কাকে ফেলায় সে দেখিয়া যদি না যায় তবে কখন পাবে না অতএব যে পিতা মাতা তাহার পুত্রকে না পড়ায় সে শত্রু এবং পুত্র সভার মধ্যে কেমন দীপ্তি হয় যেমন হংসের মধ্যে বক। মুকের শোভা যাবৎ কিছু না বলে তাবৎ মাত্র। মোটা দ্রব্য চিক্কণ হয় ও চিক্কণ মোটা হয় যেমন চন্দ্র কৃষ্ণ পক্ষে ও শুক্ল পক্ষে। সে রাজা এই সকল চিন্তা করিয়া পণ্ডিতের সভা করিলেন। ভো ভো পণ্ডিতেরা অবধান কর। আমার পুত্রেরা নিত্য উল্টা পথগামী অতএব তাহারদের নীতিশাস্ত্রে পুনর্ব্বার জন্ম দেহ। যথা কাঞ্চন সংসর্গতে কাচ যে তিনি বহুমূল্য প্রস্তরের দীপ্তি ধারণ করেন তথা সন্বিধানেতে মূর্খ যে তিনি প্রবীণতা পান। তাহার স্থল এই যদি হীনের সহিত থাকে তবে হীন মতি হয় সমানের সংসর্গে সমতা হয় বিশিষ্টের সহিত থাকিলে বিশিষ্টতা পায়। অতঃপরে বিষ্ণুশর্ম্মা নামেতে ব্রাহ্মণ মহাপণ্ডিত সকল নীতিশাস্ত্রজ্ঞ বৃহস্পতির ন্যায় কহিলেন হে মহারাজা এই সকল রাজপুত্রেরদিগকে আমি নীতিশাস্ত্রেতে জ্ঞান করিয়া দিব। বিনা ব্যাপারে কাহারু কিছু হয় না অতএব আমি মহারাজার পুত্রের-দিগকে ছয় মাসের মধ্যে যেরূপে হয় সেইরূপে নীতিশাস্ত্রেতে জ্ঞান জন্মাইয়া দিব মহারাজা তাহারদিগের কারণ কোন চিন্তা করিবেন না। মহারাজা বিনয় পূর্ব্বক পুনর্ব্বার কহিতেছেন। যদি কীট পুষ্পসহবাসে থাকে তবে সল্লোকের শিরে আরোহন করে। আর সাধু ব্যক্তি যদ্যপি পাথর স্থাপন করে তবে সে পাথর দেবত্ব পায়। যেমত পর্ব্বতের উপরের দ্রব্য নিকটে দীপ্তি হয় তেমন সতের নিকটে হীনবর্ণের দীপ্তি হয়। অতএব বিষ্ণুশর্ম্মাকে বহুমর্য্যাদা করিয়া রাজা আপন পুত্রেরদিগকে লইয়া সমর্পণ করিলেন।[1]

JOHN B. GILCHRIST AND TĀRINĪCHARAN MITRA

It would be convenient to notice here briefly Gilchrist's translation of Æsop's and other fables from English language. Although done under the direction and supervi-

1 হিতোপদেশ, pp. 3-8.

sion of Dr. Gilchrist[1] it must be borne in mind that the version occurs in a book of polyglot translation (six versions) of Æsop's and other fables into the various dialects of India[2] done by various hands (altogether seven persons were employed). For the Bengali version was responsible one Tāriṇīcharaṇ Mitra who was employed especially for "Bungla, Persian and Hindoostanee". He is called "a learned native" in the Preface by Dr Gilchrist, who also pays him a high tribute when he says "it behoves me now more particularly to specify that to Tarnee Churun Mitr's (*sic*) patient labour and considerable proficiency in the English tongue, am I greatly indebted for the accuracy and dispatch with which the collection has been at last completed. The public may yet feel and duly appreciate the benefit of his assiduity and talents, evident in the Bungla version"[3] Tāriṇīcharaṇ Mitra was "Second Moonshee" in the Hindhustani Department appointed in May 4, 1801 becoming Head Munshi on Dec. 21, 1809. As Native Secretary to School Book Society he is said to have translated some of its book.[3]

1 Dr. John Borthwick Gilchrist, LL. D., F. R. S. E. was Professor of Hindustani in the Fort William College. He was well-versed in numerous dialects of India and wrote a number of works on Hindustani.

2 This translation will be found in a publication of the Fort William College, entitled *Oriental Fabulist* (1803) by John Gilchrist. It contains: *"Polyglot Translation of Æsop's and other Ancient Fables from the English Language into Hindoostanee, Persian, Arabic, Brij bhakha, Bongla and Sunskrit in the Roman Character by Various Hands under the Direction and Superintendence of John Gilchrist for the Use of the College of Fort William.* Calcutta. Printed at the Hurkaru office, 1803." (See Roebuck, *op. cit.* App. II. p. 27 ; Buchanan, *op. cit.* p. 221).

3 p. xxiv-xxv. Gilchrist, in the Preface (p. xxv) to this work, expresses his intention of publishing the Bengali version, which seems to be the best, in a separate form, not in Roman but in Bengali characters. We do not know whether it was ever published. Long mentions Gilchrist's translation of the Æsop's fable published in 1803. We have not been able to trace this separate publication if it ever existed.

He was pensioned off from June 1, 1830, his age of retirement being 58. In 1832 he appears to have taken service under the Raja of Benares, for which he was recommended by Rādhākānta Deb. Tāriṇīcharaṇ died probably 1837 A. D. Tāriṇīcharaṇ, thus, seems also to have been proficient in Persian and Hindhustani. We select here a short piece as a specimen.[1]

ষষ্ঠ কথা। খেঁকশিয়ালী ও দাঁড়কাকের।

এক খেঁকশিয়ালী দেখিলেক এক দাঁড়কাক ভাল এক টুকরা পনীরের আপন মুখে লইয়া এক গাছের ডালের উপর বসিয়া রহিয়াছে, তৎক্ষণাৎ খেঁকশিয়ালী বিবেচনা করিতে লাগিল যে এমন সুস্বাদু গ্রাস কেমন করিয়া হাত করিতে পারিব। কহিলেক, হে প্রিয় কাক, আজি সকালে তোমাকে দেখিয়া আমি বড় সন্তুষ্ট হইয়াছি; তোমার সুন্দর মুর্ত্তি আর উজ্জ্বল পালক আমার চখের জ্যোতি, যদি নম্রতাক্রমে তুমি অনুগ্রহ করিয়া আমাকে একটি গান শুনাইতে তবে নিঃসন্দেহ জানিতাম যে তোমার স্বর তোমার আর আর গুণের সমান বটে। আনন্দোন্মত্ত কাক এই অমুনয় কথাতে ভুলিয়া তাহাকে আপন স্বরের পরিপাটী দেখাইবার জন্যে মুখ খুলিলেক তখন পনীর নীচে পড়িল, তাহা তখনি খেঁকশিয়ালী উঠাইয়া লইয়া জয়যুক্ত প্রস্থান করিলেক, আর দাঁড়কাককে অবসরক্রমে আপন মিথ্যাগরিমার খেদ করিতে রাখিয়া গেল।

ইহার ফল এই, যেখানে আরোপিত কথা প্রবেশ করে সেখানে জ্ঞানগোচর লোপ পায়।[2]

1 Roebuck, *op. cit.* App. III. p. 48. For the meagre details of Tāriṇīcharaṇ's life see Brajendranath Banerji, ফোর্ট উইলিয়াম কলেজের পণ্ডিত, under the heading of Tāriṇīcharaṇ's name.

2 *The Oriental Fabulist* (1803) ed. by Gilchrist, p. 35. In the transliteration here the spelling has been corrected, otherwise no alteration is made. The transliteration seems to have been made according to sound rather than according to spelling. The transliterated version in Roman letters is given in Appendix III at the end of this volume,

It is not little credit to the writer of this passage, as the reader will observe, that the prose for a translated piece shows great improvement indeed upon what had been published hitherto ; and it is with great difficulty that we resist the temptation of giving more extracts of this simple homely style. This work resembles Carey's *Itihās-mālā* in its perspicuity and elegance, although the latter book was published almost a decade after this. It is by always aiming to be plain, accurate and natural that the language of this work succeeds in attaining such excellence of diction among contemporary records, in spite of its very close adherence to its English original and occasional imitation, as in the passage quoted, of English and Persian constructions. It is to be regretted, however, that the writer of these pieces never tried his hand at original prose-writing which if he had touched, he might have adorned in a way better than many of his contemporaries.

CHAṆḌĪCHARAṆ MUNSĪ'S TOTĀ ITIHĀS

Chaṇḍīcharaṇ Munsī's[1] *Totā Itihās* and Rājīb Lochan Mukhopādhyāy's *Mahārāj Kṛṣṇachandra Rāyasya Charitram*, both published in the same year, exhibit noticeable contrast of style and language. *Totā Itihās*[2] is by far the

where a note also will be found on this system of transliteration written by Suniti Kumar Chatterji.

1 Called Chunder Churun Moonshee by Buchanan (*op. cit.* p. 229) which is evidently a mistake. Chaṇḍīcharaṇ died on Nov. 26, 1808.

2 There are copies of the first edition in the Library of the Board of Examiners and Presidency College Library. The title-page says: তোতা ইতিহাস। বাঙ্গালা ভাষাতে। শ্রীচণ্ডীচরণ মুন্‌শীতে রচিত। শ্রীরামপুরে ছাপা হইল। ১৮০৫ ।. Roebuck (*op. cit.* App. II. p. 29) and Buchanan (*op. cit.* p. 228) also give this date of publication. The copy in the Sāhitya Pariṣat Library (and also one in the British Museum Library), which seem to be reprints of 1825, bear a somewhat different

better work both in form and subject, although it is only a translation from some Persian original and its language shows admixture of Persian. It consists of thirty-four "tales of a parrot", as its name implies, and is said to have been translated from a Persian original "*Tootanamah*"[1] by one Kadir Bakhsh. Similar collections of tales there are also in Sanskrit, the most well-known among which is the '*Śuka-saptati*' or 'Seventy Stories of a Parrot'.[2]

We give here a description of the work under review and it is interesting to compare it with the Sanskrit version. A wife, whose husband is travelling abroad, and who is inclined to run after other men, turns to her husband's clever talking parrot for advice. The bird while seeming to approve of her wicked plans, warns her of the risk she runs, and makes her promise not to go and meet any paramour unless she

title-page. শ্রী ।/ তোতা ইতিহাস ।/ বাঙ্গালা ভাষাতে ।/ শ্রীচণ্ডীচরণ মুন্‌সীতে রচিত ।/ লণ্ডন রাজধানীতে ছাপা হইল ।/ ১৮২৫ ।/ The fount of this latter reprint is very neat. Misled probably by the date of this edition, Dinesh Chandra Sen (*History*, p. 890) puts the date apparently of the first edition at 1826. The copy of an edition in the British Museum Library bears 1806 as the date of publication (Blumhardt, *Catalogue*, p. 31). There is also mention of a 12mo Ed. printed in London 1811 in the *Catalogue of the Library of East India College*, and an 8vo. Ed. London 1811 is entered in the *Catalogue of the Library of the Hon. East India Company*, p. 196. There is a curious diglot edition (English-Bengali) of this work in the Sāhitya Pariṣat Library: the Bengali version appears on the right and English on the left side on the same page. The date cannot be ascertained for the title-page is lost; but judging from the typography, it seems to have been printed in London.

1 Buchanan, *op. cit.* p. 228. Carey recommended the translation to the Council of the College, and it is recorded in its proceedings of Nov. 12, 1804 as ready for the Press. In July 1814 we find Carey writing to the Council that "a Pundit has written in the Bengalee language a commentary on the Bhagavat Geeta". Chaṇḍīcharaṇ is also said to have translated the *Bhagavad-gītā* from Sanskrit into Bengali; this work, if published at all, we have not been able to trace.

2 Macdonell, *Hist. of Sans. Lit.* p. 375.

can extricate herself from difficulties as so-and-so did. Requested to tell the story, he does so; but in the meantime the story is spun out to such a length that when it is concluded, morning dawns and her plans are postponed till next night. Thus the bird succeeds in keeping his mistress in the path of rectitude, not by pointed injunctions, but by a device similar to that which Shehrazade in the Arabian Nights employs to hinder the Sultan from sacrificing a fresh victim on every succeeding day. Several days pass in this way, till the husband returns to find the honour of his home inviolate. This is the frame-work which contains the thirty-four stories, some of which are very amusing indeed, although many of them are somewhat coarse. It is written in simple narrative prose, eminently suited to the purpose of the book; and although cried down for its slight inevitable admixture of Persian especially at the beginning, the language is in no way inferior to that of *Hitopadeś* or *Oriental Fabulist* and certainly marks great advance in simplicity and naturalness upon *Pratāpāditya-charitra* or *Lipimālā*. Its literary pretensions are few indeed, but the writer is a very good story-teller and has succeeded in making his book interesting, both in form and matter.[1]

1 This book seems to have become very popular. William Yates, in his Selection, gives 18 stories from it alone. Yates, however, stretches his point too far when he says that the language of this work is deserving of attention because it is "a very fair specimen of the colloquial language and its almost unbounded negligence." (Rev. W. Yates, *Introduction to the Bengalee Language*, 2nd. ed. by J. Wenger in two volumes 1847 ; vol. ii containing Selections from Bengali Literature). Haughton's *Selections* (1822) contain 10 stories from it. The book was also translated into Hindustani. See Roebuck *op. cit.* App. II. p. 24: "*Tota Kuhanee* a Translation into the Hindoostanee Tongue of the popular Persian Tales, entitled Tootee Namu, by Sueyid Huedur Buksh Hueduree, under the superintendence of John Gilchrist, for the use of the students in the College of Fort William. Calcutta...printed at the Hindoostanee Press in one vol. 4to. 1804."

The following quotation of a shorter story will serve both as specimen of its tales and of its language[1]:

একজন চৌকিদার রাজা তেবরস্তানের সহিত হিতকর্ম্ম করিয়াছিল তাহার প্রসঙ্গ এই ।—

যখন দিবা গত রাত্রি উপস্থিত হইল তখন খোজেস্তা[2] বহুমূল্য শয্যা হইতে গাত্রোত্থান করিয়া নানাবিধ খাদ্যসামগ্রী আর ফলাদি আনাইয়া ভোজন করিয়া আপন চন্দ্রতুল্য বদন সাজাইয়া স্বর্ণরূপ্যের সূত্রের বস্ত্র পরিধান করিয়া শুকপক্ষির সমীপে আসিয়া রাজপুত্রের[3] নিকট যাইতে বিদায় চাহিলেন। শুক কহিলেক যে তুমি মনে কিছু উদ্বিগ্না হইও না আহ্লাদিত থাক আমি তোমার কর্ম্মে চেষ্টিত আছি তোমাকে রাজপুত্রের নিকট পহুছাইব কিন্তু রাজপুত্রের যে প্রীতি আর ভালবাসা তোমাতে আছে তাহা তুমি হৃদয়ে রাখিবা যেমন চৌকিদার আপন মনেতে তেবরস্তান রাজাকে ভরসা দ্রাঢ্য করিয়া ধন পাইয়াছিল তুমি তদ্রূপ রাজপুত্রকে ভাবনা করিও তবে তাহাকে অবশ্য পাইবা। খোজেস্তা ইহা শুনিয়া শুককে প্রশ্ন করিলেন যে তেবরস্তান রাজার উপাখ্যান কিরূপ তাহা কহ ।—

শুক উত্তর করিল যে পূর্ব্বের মনুষ্যেরা ও মন্ত্রীরা এমত কহিয়াছেন যে রাজা তেবরস্তান এক দিবস আপন সভা স্বর্গের ন্যায় সাজাইয়া উত্তম অন্ন ব্যঞ্জন এবং নানাপ্রকার মদ্যমাংস ভক্ষ্যদ্রব্য সভামধ্যে রাখিয়া ঐ দেশীয় রাজপুত্র ও মর্য্যাদক ও পণ্ডিত ও শিক্ষাগুরুরদিগকে সেই স্থানে উপস্থিত করিয়া সেই সব উত্তম দ্রব্য তাঁহারদিগকে ভোজন করাইতেছিলেন ইতিমধ্যে অকস্মাৎ সেই স্থানে একজন বিদেশী উপস্থিত হইল। তদনন্তর রাজসভাস্থ প্রধানেরা তাহাকে জিজ্ঞাসিলেন যে তুমি কে কোথা হইতে আসিয়াছ কি

1 This story also occurs in another form in the *Hitopadeśa*. It is also quoted in Haughton's *Selections*, pp. 12-18 ; trans. pp. 92-96.

2 This is the wife whose husband Maymun has gone abroad. This introductory passage as well as the conclusion forms the link which connects a particular story with what precedes and what follows it, and is thus a part of the frame-work into which stories of miscellaneous character are thrown in.

3 This is the paramour with whom an appointment was made to meet at midnight.

কার্য্য কর। সেই ব্যক্তি উত্তর করিলেক যে আমি তলোয়ার মারিতে আর ব্যাঘ্র ধরিতে পারি ইহা ব্যতিরেক আর আর রূপ শিল্পকর্ম্ম জ্ঞাত আছি আর তীর এমত মারিতে পারি যে আমার তীর কঠিন প্রস্তরেতে ছিদ্র করিয়া নির্গত হয় এবং খজেন্দর নামা একজন ধনবান আছেন আমি কিছু দিবস তাঁহার নিকটে চাকর ছিলাম কিন্তু খজেন্দর আমার কিছু গুণ বিবেচনা করিয়া বুঝিলেন না এতএব আমি তাঁহার চাকরি ত্যাগ করিয়া মহারাজ তেবরস্তানের নাম শুনিয়া তাহার নিকট চাকরি করিতে আসিয়াছি। মহারাজা তেবরস্তান এই কথা শুনিয়া রাজদরবারের লোকেরদিগকে আজ্ঞা দিলেন যে এই ব্যক্তিকে চৌকিদারি কর্ম্মে নিযুক্ত কর। পরে কর্ম্মকর্ত্তারা রাজাজ্ঞানুসারে তাহাকে চৌকিদারি চাকুরিতে নিযুক্ত করিলেন। সেই জন প্রত্যহ রাত্রিতে এক পদে দাঁড়াইয়া রাজার অট্টালিকারদিগে দৃষ্টি করিয়া থাকে এক দিবস অর্দ্ধরাত্রের পরে রাজা উপর ঘরের ছাতে বেড়াইয়া সকল দিগে দৃষ্টি করিতে করিতে নীচেতে দেখিলেন যে এক জন এক পাদে দাঁড়াইয়া রহিয়াছে। রাজা তাহাকে দেখিয়া জিজ্ঞাসিলেন তুমি কে বট অর্দ্ধ নিশাতে কি কারণ এক পদে দাঁড়াইয়া আছ। চৌকিদার কহিলেক যে রাজদর্শনার্থে আকাঙ্ক্ষিত ছিলাম অদ্য আমার ভাগ্যের সহকারেতে দর্শন করিয়া বড় আহ্লাদিত আমোদিত হইলাম। রাজা আর চৌকিদারেতে এই কথোপকথন হইতেছিল ইতিমধ্যে মাঠের দিগ হইতে এক শব্দ রাজার কর্ণকুহরে পঁহুছিল সে শব্দ এই একজন কহিতেছে যে আমি যাইতেছি কে এমত মনুষ্য আছে যে আমাকে ফিরাইবে। ইহা শুনিয়া রাজা বিস্মিত হইয়া চৌকিদারকে কহিলেন যে ওহে চৌকিদার এ শব্দের বৃত্তান্ত তুমি কিছু জানহ। চৌকিদার উত্তর করিল ও মহারাজ কএক দিবস রাত্রিযোগে এইরূপ শব্দ শুনিতেছি কিন্তু চৌকিদারি কর্ম্মেতে থাকিতে কারণ গমন করিয়া জ্ঞাত হইতে পারি না যে এ শব্দ কাহার যদি আপনি আজ্ঞা দেন তবে অতি শীঘ্র গমন করিয়া শব্দের নিশ্চয় জানিয়া তোমার দাসেরদের সাক্ষাতে বিস্তারিত নিবেদন করিতে পারি। রাজা কহিলেন শীঘ্র যাইয়া সম্বাদ আনহ। চৌকিদার রাজাজ্ঞা পাইয়া তৎক্ষণাৎ গমন করিলেন। পরে রাজা কৃষ্ণবর্ণ এক কম্বলেতে শরীর ঢাকিয়া চৌকিদারের পশ্চাৎ গেলেন। চৌকিদার সে

স্থানে পঁহুছিয়া দেখিল যে পথমধ্যে এক সুন্দরী দাঁড়াইয়া কহিতেছে যে আমি যাইতেছি আমাকে কে ফিরাইবেক। ইহা শুনিয়া চৌকিদার প্রশ্ন করিলেক যে ও স্ত্রীলোক তুমি এমত কথা কেন কহিতেছ। সে স্ত্রীলোক উত্তর করিলেক যে আমি রাজা তেবরস্তানের পরমায়ুর প্রতিমূর্ত্তী রাজার আয়ুঃ শেষ হইয়াছে অতএব আমি যাইতেছি। চৌকিদার ইহা শুনিয়া কহিলেন তুমি রাজার পরমায়ু এখন তুমি কিরূপে বাহুড়িয়া থাকিবে। প্রতিবিম্ব কহিলেন শুন হে চৌকিদার যদ্যপি তুমি আপন পুত্রকে রাজার পরমায়ুর বদলেতে আমার সম্মুখে বলিদান দেও তবে আমি অবশ্য ফিরিয়া থাকিব রাজাও কতক কাল বাঁচিয়া থাকিবেন কদাচ শীঘ্র মরিবেন না। চৌকিদার ইহা শুনিয়া তুষ্ট হইয়া উত্তর করিলেক যদি আমার প্রাণ আর আমার পুত্রের প্রাণ এই দুই দিলেও রাজা রক্ষা পান তবে অবশ্য দিব কিন্তু তুমি মুহূর্ত্তেক বিলম্ব কর আমি বাটী যাইয়া আপন সন্তানকে আনিয়া তোমার সাক্ষাতে বলিদান করি। ইহা বলিয়া চৌকিদার আপন গৃহেতে যাইয়া এই সমস্ত কথা বড় পুত্রকে অবগত করিলেক। তদনন্তর সেই পুত্র সংবিবেচক জ্ঞানী ইহাই শুনিয়া উত্তর করিল যে রাজা তেবরস্তান অতি বিচারক ও প্রজাপালক দৈনদুঃখদূরকর্ত্তা যদি আমাকে বলিদান করিলে তিনি রক্ষা পান এ বড় উত্তম প্রকরণ কেন না আমার মরণেতে ক্ষতি নাহি এ রাজার মন্দ হইলে আর কোন দুর্জ্জন ব্যক্তি রাজা হইবেন তাহার দুষ্টতাতে সহস্র২ লোক নাশ হইয়া দেশ ওএরাণ হইবেক রাজা তেবরস্তান বাঁচিলে সহস্র২ প্রজালোকেরদিগের সুখ এবং দেশের আবাদ হইবেক ও আমি শিক্ষাগুরুর স্থানে শুনিয়াছি তিনি এক দিবস চৌবাটীর পড়ুয়ারদিগকে কহিতেছিলেন যে রাজসমভিব্যাহৃত লোকেরা যদি বিচারক রাজার প্রাণ রক্ষার্থে এক জন প্রজাকে নষ্ট করে ইহাতে পাপ হয় না। ঈশ্বর করেন যে এমত রাজা না মরেন আর অবিচারক রাজা রাজ্য না করে অতএব শীঘ্র আমাকে প্রতিমার নিকট লইয়া যাও এবং ছেদন কর তারপর চৌকিদার প্রতিমার সাক্ষাতে পুত্রকে আনিয়া হস্তপাদাদি বন্ধন করিয়া তীক্ষ্ণ ছোরা আপন করে লইয়া হেঁটমুণ্ড হইয়া ছেদন করিতে উদ্যত হইল। প্রতিবিম্ব ইহা দেখিয়া শীঘ্র চৌকিদারের হস্ত ধরিয়া নিষেধ করিলেন যে তুমি তোমার পুত্রের গলা ছেদন

করিও না ঈশ্বর সর্ব্বকর্ত্তা তোমার যোগ্যতা আর উত্তমতাতে বড তুষ্ট হইয়া অনুগ্রহ করিয়া আমাকে ফিরিয়া ষষ্টিশত বৎসর থাকিতে আজ্ঞা দিলেন। চৌকিদার এই মঙ্গল সমাচার শুনিয়া বড় অহ্লাদিত হইল। চৌকিদারে আর প্রতিমাতে এবং চৌকিদারের পুত্রেতে যে কথোপকথন হইয়াছিল রাজা সেই সমস্ত শুনিয়া এবং দেখিয়া চৌকিদারের আগমনের পূর্ব্বে গৃহে আসিয়া অট্টালিকার উপর পূর্ব্ববৎ ভ্রমণ করিতে লাগিলেন।

চৌকিদার অর্দ্ধদণ্ডগতে রাজার সম্মুখে আসিয়া উপস্থিত হইয়া প্রণাম করিয়া মঙ্গল প্রার্থনা করিল যে মহারাজার আয়ুঃ ও ঐশ্বর্য্য এবং রাজ্য আর সৈন্যের বৃদ্ধি হউক। তারপর রাজা জিজ্ঞাসিলেন ওহে চৌকিদার কহ শব্দের বৃত্তান্ত কি জানিলা। চৌকিদার কহিলেক মহারাজ শ্রবণ করিতে আজ্ঞা হউক। এক স্ত্রী সর্ব্বাঙ্গসুন্দরী আপন স্বামির সহিত কলহ বরিয়া বাটী হইতে বাহিরে আসিয়া পথমধ্যে বসিয়া মনোদুঃখেতে শব্দ করিতেছিল যে আমি যাইতেছি এমত কোন ব্যক্তি আছে আমাকে ফিরাইবে। আমি সেই স্ত্রীর সাক্ষাতে পঁহুছিয়া কোমল বাক্য দ্বারায় তুষিয়া তাহারদের স্ত্রীপুরুষে মিলন করিয়া দিলাম এখন সেই স্ত্রী স্বীকৃত হইলেন যে আমি স্বামির বাটী হইতে আর ষষ্টিশত বৎসর আর কোথাও যাইব না। রাজা চৌকিদারের উত্তম ধারাতে আর জ্ঞানেতে তুষ্ট হইয়া কহিলেন ওহে চৌকিদার যে কালে তুমি আমার বাটীর বাহির হইলা সেই সময় আমিও তোমার পশ্চাৎ গমন করিয়া দূর হইতে তোমার আর প্রতিমার এবং তোমার তনয়ের উত্তর প্রত্যুত্তর শুনিয়াছি আর তোমরা যাহা করিয়াছিলা তাহাও দেখিয়াছি ঈশ্বর তোমার ভাল করিবেন এবং আমিও ভগবানের প্রার্থনার দ্বারা তোমার দৈন্য দূর করিব ও ধনবান করিব। তারপর রাজা রাজসিংহাসনে উপবিষ্ট হইলে দেশের প্রধানেরা ও সকল বিচারকেরাও হাজীর হইলেন। এই সময় রাজা তাঁহারদের সাক্ষাতে চৌকিদারকে প্রধান মন্ত্রী ও ধনভাণ্ডারির কর্ম্মে নিযুক্ত করিয়া চাবি ও কুলুপ সকল তাহাকে সমর্পণ করিলেন।—

তোতা তেবরস্তান রাজার এই কথা সাঙ্গ করিলেই রাত্রি প্রভাত ও সূর্য্য উদয় হইল এ কারণ সেই দিবস খোজেস্তার যাওন হইল না। খোজেস্তা

সমস্ত রজনী এই ইতিহাস শ্রবণে জাগ্রত ছিলেন অতএব মথমলের বিছানাতে শয়ন করিলেন।[1]

RĀJĪBLOCHAN MUKHOPĀDHYĀY
MAHĀRĀJ KṚṢṆACHANDRA RĀYASYA CHARITRAM 1805

As in the case of most of the Bengali writers of this period, nothing practically is known about the life of the author of *Mahārāj Kṛṣṇachandra Rāyasya Charitram*[2] except that in the description of the book given by Buchanan,[3] Rājīblochan is said to have been "descended from the family of the Raja." He was appointed subordinate Pundit on May 4, 1801. He received an award from the Council

1 তোতা ইতিহাস, pp. 21-29.

2 The title-page says ; History of Raja Krishnu Chundru Roy: মহারাজ কৃষ্ণচন্দ্র রায়স্য চরিত্রং। শ্রীযুত রাজীবলোচন মুখোপাধ্যায়ের রচিতং। কৃষ্ণচন্দ্র মহারাজ ধরণীর মাঝ যাহার অধিকারে নবদ্বীপ সমাজ। পূর্ব্ববৃত্তান্ত যত করিয়া প্রচার কৃষ্ণচন্দ্র চরিত্র পরে করিব বিস্তার ॥ শ্রীরামপুরে ছাপা হইল। ১৮০৫। pp. 1-120. Long says that it was reprinted in London 1830, but the second reprint at Śrīrāmpur bears the date of 1857 (Sāhitya-Pariṣat Library). There is a copy in the Library of the Board of Examiners which is reprinted at Śrīrāmpur bearing the date of 1834 ; and two copies in the British Museum Library (Blumhardt, *Catalogue*, p. 89) printed in London in 1811. Also mentioned in the *Catalogue of the Library of the East India College* (1843) and *Catalogue of the Library of the Hon'ble East India Company* (1845) p. 196. There are copies of the first edition of this work in the Library of the Board of Examiners and also in the Bengal Asiatic Society Library. In the paper on Bengali Literature (*Cal. Rev.* xiii. 1850) Long gives this work the absurd date of 1801 ; and following him, Ramgati Nyayaratna repeats the error. See, however, Roebuck, *op. cit*, App. II. p. 29: also Buchanan, *op. cit.* p. 228. Besides this work of Rājīblochan's contains a reference at p. 9 to Rām Rām Basu's *Pratāpāditya-charitra* ; it must therefore have been published after 1801.

3 *Op. cit.* p. 228. The full description is this: "an original work in the Bengali language containing the correspondence between the Raja and the English in the early period of their intercourse with Bengal by Rajeeblochan Moonshee descended from the family of the Raja."

in Nov. 1804. His work is supposed to be an authentic account of the Rājā, dead not many years before this book was published, and of his correspondence with the English in the early period of their intercourse with Bengal. But it seems that the memoir is more of a tissue of fables and traditionary tales; and much of the narrative, especially at the beginning, is mere fiction such as tradition or the fancy of the writer might have suggested. We do not go so far as to suggest that these tales were invented, as Dr. Yates[1] remarks, "in order to gain the favour of the English"; but we must admit that it shows more leaning towards gossip than *Pratāpāditya-charitra* does. In point of language, however, the last-named work compares very unfavourably with the work under review. Mahamahopadhyay Haraprasad groups this work with *Pratāpāditya* in the class of "unreadables" for its language, but the plain story-telling style, occasionally Sanskritised and wholly free from Persian, eminently befits the gossipy tendency of the work. The story is enlivened by frequent introduction of descriptions, dialogues, letters and anecdotes; and the narrative towards the end, describing the Rājā's acquaintance with the Nawāb, his joining the conspiracy, his negotiations with the English, and the ultimate triumph of his party with the defeat of the Nawāb is told in a connected and interesting manner, with a large infusion, however, of fiction which may not be strictly acceptable to the historian. But it is this mingling of fact and gossip that makes the work so interesting to the general reader.

The work begins with a preliminary account, legendary and historical, of pedigrees and ancestries, then narrates the story of Rājā Kṛṣṇachandra's birth, his marriage, his religious work, a description of his residence called Śiba-nibāsa, his amusements, his acquaintances with Nawāb Sirāj, his joining a conspiracy started by Mīr Jā'far and others against the Nawāb, his delegation to the English at Calcutta

1 *Introd. to Beng. Lang.* vol. ii, p. 124. Seton-Karr's severity on his work (*Cal. Rev.* 1849, p. 501), following Yates, seems to be unwarranted.

by the conspirators, his negotiations there with the Baḍa-sāheb of the Factory, flight of Rājballabh and his son, correspondence between the Nawāb and the English, the Nawāb's descent upon Calcutta, agreement with Mīr Jā'far, the meeting of the English and Muhammedan forces at Plassey, flight of Sirāj and his assasination by Mīran; and then the story ends with a short account of the posterity of the Rājā. We give here an extract from the passage describing the Rājā's joining the conspiracy, which will serve as a specimen of both its language and manner.[1]

রাজা [কৃষ্ণচন্দ্র] বাসায় আসিয়া মহারাজ মহেন্দ্র ও রাজা রামনারায়ণ ও রাজা রাজবল্লভ এবং জগৎসেট ও মীরজাফররালি খাঁ ইহারদিগের নিকট মনুষ্য প্রেরিত করিলেন আমি সাক্ষাৎ করিতে যাইব সকলেই অনুমতি করিলেন রাত্রে আসিতে কহিও ক্রমে২ রাজা সকলের নিকট রাত্রে গমন করিয়া আত্মনিবেদন করিলেন। পরে জগৎসেট কহিলেন এ দেশের অত্যন্ত অপ্রতুল হইল দেশাধিকারী অতিদুরন্ত কারু বাক্য শুনে না দিন২ দৌরাত্ম্য অধিক হইতেছে অতএব সকলে একবাক্যতা হইয়া বিবেচনা না করিলে কাহারু নিস্কৃতি নাই এই কথার পর রাজা কৃষ্ণচন্দ্র রায় কহিলেন আপনারা রাজদ্বারের কর্ত্তা আমরা আপনকারদিগের মতাবলম্বী যেমন২ কহিবেন সেইরূপ কার্য্য করিব ইহাই শুনিয়া জগৎসেট কহিলেন অদ্য বাসায় যাউন আমি মহারাজা মহেন্দ্রের সহিত পরামর্শ করিয়া নিভৃত একস্থানে বসিয়া আপনকাকে ডাকাইব সে দিবস বিদায় হইয়া রাজা বাসায় আসিলেন। পরে এক দিবস জগৎসেটের বাটীতে রাজা মহেন্দ্র প্রভৃতি সকলে বসিয়া রাজা কৃষ্ণচন্দ্র রায়কে আহ্বান করিলেন দুত আসিয়া রাজাকে লইয়া গেল যথাযোগ্য স্থানে সকলে বসিলেন। ক্ষণেক পরে রাজা রামনারায়ণ প্রশ্ন করিলেন আপনারা সকলেই বিবেচনা করুন দেশাধিকারী অতিশয় দুর্বৃত্ত উত্তর২ দৌরাত্ম্যের বৃদ্ধি হইতেছে অতএব কি করা যায় এই কথার পর মহারাজা মহেন্দ্র কহিলেন আমরা পুরুষানুক্রমে নবাবের চাকর যদি আমারদিগের হইতে কোন ক্ষতি নবাব সাহেবের হয় তবে অধর্ম্ম এবং অখ্যাতি অতএব আমি কোন মন্দ কর্ম্মের মধ্যে থাকিব না

1 *Mahārāj Kṛṣṇachandra Rāyasya Charitram*, pp. 65-73.

তবে যে পূর্ব্বে এক আধ বাক্য কহিয়া ছিলাম সে বড় উষ্মা প্রযুক্ত এইক্ষণে বিবেচনা করিলাম এ সব কার্য্য ভাল নয় এই কথার পর রাজা রামনারায়ণ ও রাজা রাজবল্লভ এবং জগৎসেট ও মীরজাফরালি খাঁ কহিলেন যদ্যপি আপনি এ পরামর্শ হইতে ক্ষান্ত হইলেন কিন্তু দেশ রক্ষা পায় না এবং ভদ্র লোকের জাতি প্রাণ থাকা ভার হইল। অনেক অনেক রূপ কহিতে মহারাজা মহেন্দ্র কহিলেন তোমরা কি প্রকার করিবা তখন রাজা রামনারায়ণ কহিলেন পূর্ব্বে এ কথার প্রস্তাপ এক দিবস হইয়াছিল তাহাতে সকলে কহিয়াছিলেন রাজা কৃষ্ণচন্দ্র রায় অতি বড় মন্ত্রী তাঁহাকে আনাইয়া জিজ্ঞাসা করা যাউক তিনি যেমন২ পরামর্শ দিবেন সেইমত কার্য্য করিব এখন রাজা কৃষ্ণচন্দ্র রায় এই সাক্ষাতে আছেন ইহাকে জিজ্ঞাসা করুণ যে যে পরামর্শ কহেন তাহাই শ্রবণ করিয়া যে হয় পশ্চাৎ করিবেন। ইহার পর রাজা কৃষ্ণচন্দ্র রায়কে সকলে জিজ্ঞাসা করিলেন তুমি সকলি জ্ঞাত হইয়াছ এখন কি কর্ত্তব্য। রাজা কৃষ্ণচন্দ্র রায় হাস্য করিয়া নিবেদন করিলেন মহাশয়েরা সকলেই প্রধান মনুষ্য আপনকারা আমাকে অনুমতি করিতেছেন পরামর্শ দিতে এ বড় আশ্চর্য্য সে যে হউক আমি নিবেদন করি তাহা শ্রবণ করুন আমারদিগের দেশাধিকারী যিনি ইনি জবন ইহার দৌরাত্ম্যক্রমে আপনারা ব্যস্ত হইয়া উপায়ান্তর চিন্তা করিতেছেন। সমভিব্যাহৃত মীরজাফরালি খাঁ সাহেব ইনিও জাতে জবন অতএব আমার আশ্চর্য্য বোধ হইতেছে। এই কথার পর সকলে হাস্য করিয়া কহিলেন হাঁ ইনি জবন বটেন কিন্তু ইহাঁর প্রকৃতি অতি উত্তম আপনি ইহাকে সন্দেহ করিবেন না পশ্চাৎ কৃষ্ণচন্দ্র রায় নিবেদন করিলেন এ দেশের উপর বুঝি ঈশ্বরের নিগ্রহ হইয়াছে নতুবা এক কালীন এত হয় না প্রথম যিনি দেশাধিকারী ইহাঁর সর্ব্বদা পরানিষ্ট চিন্তা এবং যেখানে শুনেন সুন্দরী স্ত্রী আছে তাহা বলক্রমে গ্রহণ করেন এবং কিঞ্চিৎ অপরাধে জাতি প্রাণ নষ্ট করেন দ্বিতীয় বর্গী আসিয়া দেশ লুট করে তাহাতে মনোযোগ নাই তৃতীয় সন্যাসী আসিয়া যাহার উত্তম ঘর দেখে তাহাই ভাঙ্গিয়া কাষ্ঠ করে তাহা কেহ নিবারণ করে না অশেষ প্রকার এ দেশে উৎপাত হইয়াছে অতএব দেশের কর্ত্তা জবন থাকিলে কাহারু ধর্ম্ম থাকিবে না এবং জাতিও থাকিবে না অতএব ঈশ্বরের নিগ্রহ না হইলে এত

উৎপাত হয় না আমি এ কারণ অনেক২ বিশিষ্ট লোককে কহিয়াছি তোমরা সকলের ঈশ্বরের আরাধনা বিশিষ্টরূপে কর যেন আর উৎপাত না হয় এবং জবন অধিকারী না থাকে আত্ম২ জাতি ধর্ম্ম রক্ষা পায় এইরূপ ব্যবহার আমি সর্ব্বদাই করিতেছি অতএব নিবেদন করি ঈশ্বর সৃষ্টি করিয়াছেন নষ্ট করিবেন না কিন্তু এক সুপরামর্শ আছে আমি নিবেদন করি যদি সকলের পরামর্শ সিদ্ধ হয় তবে তাহার চেষ্টা পাইতে পারি। তখন সকলে জিজ্ঞাসা করিলেন কি পরামর্শ কহ রাজা কৃষ্ণচন্দ্র রায় কহিলেন সকলে মনোযোগ করিয়া শ্রবণ করুন। এ দেশের অধিকারী সর্ব্বপ্রকারে উত্তম হন এবং অন্য জাতি ও এতদ্দেশীয় না হন তবেই মঙ্গল হয়। জগৎসেট প্রভৃতি কহিলেন এমন কে তাহা বিস্তারিয়া কহ রাজা কহিলেন বিলাতে নিবাস জাতে ইঙ্গরাজ কলিকাতায় কোঠি করিয়া আছেন যদি তাঁহারা এ রাজ্যের রাজা হন তবে সকল মঙ্গল হবেক। ইহা শুনিয়া সকলেই কহিলেন তাঁহারদিগের কি২ গুণ আছে রাজা কৃষ্ণচন্দ্র রায় কলিলেন তাঁহারদিগের গুণ এই২ সকল সত্যবাদী জিতেন্দ্রিয় পরহিংসা করেন না যোদ্ধা অতি বড় প্রজা প্রতি যথেষ্ট দয়া এবং অত্যন্ত ক্ষমতাপন্ন বুদ্ধিতে বৃহস্পতির ন্যায় ধনেতে কুবের তুল্য ধার্ম্মিক এবং অর্জ্জুনের ন্যায় পরাক্রম প্রজাপালনে সাক্ষাৎ যুধিষ্টির এবং সকলে ঐক্যতাপন্ন শিষ্টের পালন দুষ্টের দমন রাজার সকল গুণ তাঁহাদিগের আছে অতএব যদি তাঁহারা এ দেশাধিকারী হন তবে সকলের নিস্তার নতুবা জবনে সকল নষ্ট করিবেক। এই কথার পর জগৎশেট কহিলেন তাঁহারা উত্তম বটেন তাহা আমি জ্ঞাত আছি কিন্তু তাঁহাদিগের বাক্য আমরাও বুঝিতে পারি না ও আমাদিগের বাক্য তাঁহারাও বুঝিতে পারেন না ইহার পর রাজা কৃষ্ণচন্দ্র রায় কহিলেন এখন তাঁহারা কলিকাতায় কোঠি করিয়া বাণিজ্য করিতেছেন সেই কলিকাতার দক্ষিণে কালীঘাট নামে এক স্থান আছে তাহাতে কালীঠাকুরাণী আছেন আমি মধ্যে২ কালী পূজার কারণ গিয়া থাকি সেই কালে কলিকাতার কোঠির যিনি বড় সাহেব তাঁহার সহিত সাক্ষাৎ করিয়া থাকি ইহাতেই তাঁহার চরিত্র আমি সমস্তই জ্ঞাত আছি। এই কথার পর রাজা রামনারায়ণ কহিলেন আপনি মধ্যে২ কলিকাতার কোঠির বড় সাহেবের সঙ্গে সাক্ষাৎ করেন কিন্তু তাঁহার বাক্য কি প্রকারে আপনি

বুঝেন আর আপনকার কথা তিনি বা কি প্রকারে জ্ঞাত হন। এই কথার উত্তর রাজা কৃষ্ণচন্দ্র রায় কহিলেন কলিকাতায় অনেক২ বিশিষ্ট লোকের বসতি আছে তাঁহারা সকলে ইঙ্গরাজী ভাষা অভ্যাস করিয়াছেন। এবং সেই সকল বিশিষ্ট মনুষ্য সাহেবের চাকর আছেন তাঁহারাই বুঝাইয়া দেন। ইহা শুনিয়া সকলে কহিলেন ইহাঁরা এ দেশের কর্ত্তা হইলে সকল রক্ষা পায় অতএব আপনি কলিকাতায় গমন করিয়া যে সকল কথা উপস্থিত হইল এই সকল বৃত্তান্ত কোঠির বড় সাহেবের নিকট জ্ঞাত করাইবা তিনি যেমন২ কহেন বিস্তারিত আমারদের কহিবা এবং তিনি প্রতিজ্ঞা করিবেন তাঁহারা দেশাধিকারী হইলে আমারদিগের এ রাজ্যের প্রতুল করিবেন আর এখন যে২ কার্য্য আমারদিগের আছে ইহাতেই রাখিবেন। এই কথার পরে রাজা কৃষ্ণচন্দ্র রায় কহিলেন তাঁহারা দেশাধিকারী হইবেন রাজ্যের প্রতুল রাখিলেই রাজার প্রতুল হয় আমাদের এ কথা কহনে আবশ্যক নাই তবে যে কথা কহিলেন আপনার দিগের যে যে কার্য্য আছে ইহাতে নিযুক্ত রাখিবেন তাহার কোন সন্দেহ মহাশয়েরা করিবেন না তাঁহাদিগের রাজ্য হইলেই সুখী সকল লোক হইবেক কিন্তু আপনারা আমাকে নিতান্ত স্থির করিয়া আজ্ঞা করুন। পরে সকলেই কহিলেন এই স্থির হইল আপনি কলিকাতায় গমন করুন ইহা বলিয়া রাজা কৃষ্ণচন্দ্র রায়কে বিদায় করিয়া সকলে স্ব স্ব স্থানে প্রস্থান করিলেন।

MṚTYUÑJAY BIDYĀLAṄKĀR

The name of Mṛtyuñjay Bidyālaṅkār,[1] for many years the chief Pundit of the College of Fort William and for some time Carey's own Munsi, is an important one in the literary history of this period. Nothing practically is known about his life, but he is said to have been born in 1762 at Midnapore (then included in Orissa) and educated at Natore.

1 Mṛtyuñjay's title was Bidyālaṅkār and not Tarkālaṅkār as mentioned by Dinesh Chandra Sen in *History* (p. 886). See Roebuck, *op. cit.* App. II, p. 29 : also Smith, *op. cit.* p. 170. Rāmmohan Rāy in his কবিতাকারের সহিত বিচার gives the title correctly as বিদ্যালঙ্কার ভট্টাচার্য্য।

He was appointed Chief Pundit on May 1801. He resigned on July 9, 1816 (resignation accepted July 13, 1816) after being appointed Pundit at the Supreme Court. He did not know English; his letter of resignation is written in Bengali. He died in 1819 near Murshidabad. It is noteworthy that in the agitation on Satī Mṛtyuñjay gave his opinion in favour of its abolition. In the English preface to *Prabodh-chandrikā* which was edited in 1833 after Mṛtyuñjay's death, Marshman eulogises the learned Pundit as "one of the most profound scholars of the age." "At the head of the establishment of Pundits" Marshman writes elsewhere,[1] "stood Mrityuñjay, who although a native of Orissa,[2] usually regarded as the Bœotia of the country, was a colossus of literature".[3] Carey writes in 1816 that "in point of learning very few are his equals". "He bore a strong resemblance to our great lexicographer not only by his stupendous acquirements and soundness of his critical judgments but also in his rough features and his unwieldy figure. His knowledge of the Sanscrit classics was

1 *History of Serampore Mission.*

2 Mṛtyuñjay is said to have been as proficient in the Oḍiyā dialect as in Bengali. It was his help that enabled Carey to translate the Scriptures into the Oḍiyā dialect (Smith, *op. cit.* p. 190). The Oḍiyā Bible was in fact translated by "Poorush Ram, the Orissa Pundit" and revised and compared with the original Greek by Carey.

3 In this connexion, M. M. Haraprasad Sastri, in the lecture referred to before, speaks of Mṛtyuñjay as an Oḍīyā, but it might be noted here that although born in a province of Orissa, it is very doubtful whether Mṛtyuñjay was really an Oḍiyā. From the edition of his work *Rājābalī*, published in 1889 by a person calling himself the writer's grandson, it seems that he belonged to the Chaṭṭopādhyāy class of Bengali Brahmans: for the title-page of the aforesaid edition says: "গ্রন্থকারের পৌত্র শ্রীবেহারি লাল চট্টোপাধ্যায় কর্ত্তৃক রাজা রাজবল্লভ ষ্ট্রীট ৫২ নং ভবন হইতে প্রকাশিত। পঞ্চম সংস্করণ।" Rāmmohan Rāy, again (*Works:* Panini Office Reprint. p. 646) calls Mṛtyuñjay a Bhaṭṭāchāryya, and his controversy with the Pundit is styled by himself ভটাচার্য্যের সহিত বিচার। Mṛtyuñjay was a Rāḍīya Brāhmaṇ (থানের চাটুতি শ্রীকরের সন্তান).

unrivalled, and his Bengali composition has never been superseded for ease, simplicity and vigour. Mr. Carey sat under his instruction two or three hours daily while in Calcutta, and the effect of this intercourse was speedily visible in the superior accuracy and purity of his translations".[1] He was specially attached to Carey, and it was at Carey's suggestion that he undertook the literary works which constitute his chief contribution to Bengali literature and language.[2]

HIS WORKS

The literary labours of Mṛtyuñjay, embracing almost the whole of this decade (1802-1813), consist, besides a Defence of Idolatory,[3] of the following four publications, of which two are original works and two translations from Sanskrit:

1. *Batriś Siṁhāsan*, 1802.
2. *Hitopadeś*, 1808. 2nd Ed. 1814. 3rd Ed. 1821.
3. *Rājābalī*, 1808.
4. *Prabodh Chandrikā*, 1833.

1 Carey, however, was never influenced by Mṛtyuñjay's pompous, affected, sanskritised language. His native instinct for realism saved him from this extreme.

2 Mṛtyuñjay was, as noted above, one of the jurists of the Supreme Court from 1816; and when the agitation about Satī was at its height and the whole body of law-pundits wrote of it as "permitted," Mṛtyuñjay gave his opinion that, according to Hinduism, a life of mortification rather than self-immolation was the law for a widow.

3 Rev. J. Long, *Return of the Names and Writings of 515 Persons connected with Bengali Literature* (1855), p. 135. This work, *Defence of Idolatory*, as mentioned by Long, seems to have been the same as the *Bedānta Chandrikā* against which Rāmmohan Rāy wrote his ভট্টাচার্য্যের সহিত বিচার (1817) and his English tract "A Second Defence of the Monotheistical System of the Veds in Reply to an Apology for the present State of Hindu Worship" (1817). Says Miss Collect; "Another defendant of Hinduism appeared some months later in the Head Pundit of the Government College at Calcutta, Mrityunjoy Vidyalankar, who published a tract called *Vedanta Chandrika.*" (*Life and Letters of Raja Rammohan Ray*, p. 23. See also Nagendranath Chatterji, *Life of Rammohan Ray* in Bengali, p. 103). The *Bedānta Chandrikā* was printed

The *Batriś Simhāsan*[1] is a close translation in plain simple Bengali of a very popular and well-known Sanskrit work which is sometimes supposed to be of Buddhistic origin, sometimes attributed to no less a writer than Kālidāsa. The title literally means the *thirty-two thrones* but it should be rather the *thirty-two images of Bikramāditya's throne.*[2] Each

both in Bengali and in English. It defended the current form of idolatorous Hinduism against Rāmmohan's party. Its title-page states: An/Apology/for/the Present System/of/Hindoo Worship./ Written in the Bengalee language, and Accompanied by/an English Translation./ Calcutta/Printed by A. G. Balfour, at the Government Gezette/Press, No. 1, Mission Row./1817/.—The name of Mṛtyuñjay as the author does not occur but there is evidence to show (*Cal. Review* 1845, pp. 44-45 and School Book Society's Report 1819-25) that he was the author. The work shows all the scholarship and sincerity of an orthodox Pundit, but at the same time it is marked by a deplorable tone of violence and personal rancour. Reviewed in *Calcutta Review*, 1868, p. 43f.

1 The first edition (which is in the Imperial, now National, Library, Calcutta) bears the following title-page: বত্রিশ সিংহাসন। সংগ্রহ ভাষাতে। মৃত্যুঞ্জয় শর্ম্মণা ক্রিয়তে। শ্রীরামপুরে ছাপা হইল। ১৮০২। pp. 210. The copy in the British Museum Library bears the following title-page ; বত্রিশ সিংহাসন। মৃত্যুঞ্জয় শর্ম্মণা ক্রিয়তে। ১৮০৮। Roebuck, *op. cit.* having apparently seen this edition gives 1808 as the date of its first publication ; and this has been the usual date given by those who follow him (e.g. Long, Ramgati Nyayaratna etc.). But Buchanan, *op. cit.* in 1805 mentions this publication at p. 222, though he gives no exact date. The title-page of the London reprint says: শ্রীবিক্রমাদিত্যের বত্রিশ পুত্তলিকা সিংহাসন সংগ্রহ। বাঙ্গালা ভাষাতে। শ্রীমৃত্যুঞ্জয় শর্ম্মণা রচিত। লন্দন মহানগরেতে ছাপা হইল। ১৮১৬। The edition in the Library of the Board of Examiners (London reprint) also bears 1816 as the date of publication. There was a Śrīrāmpur reprint in 1818, as is evident from the entry in the *Catalogue of the Calcutta Public Library* (1898), and another reprint as late as 1834 as the copy in the Sāhitya Pariṣat Library and entry in the *Catalogue of Bengali Printed Books in the British Museum* show (p. 67). The London ed. of 1834 is also mentioned in the *Catalogue of the Library of the East India College.*

2 It is also sometimes known as *Bikrama-charitra*, because King Bikrama is the hero, tales of whose prowess and virtue are told by the thirty-two images of his charmed throne discovered by Bhoja.

of these images is introduced as telling a story descriptive of the princely character of that king, and showing that a prince worthy of succeeding him cannot be found. The earlier style of Mṛtyuñjay, as displayed in this work, if not superior to that of some of his contemporaries, was certainly less affected and pedantic than his later style, although somewhat sanskritised. It presents a great contrast indeed in language and manner at once to Carey's *Dialogues* as well as to *Pratāpāditya-charitra* published only a year before itself and *Lipimālā* published in the same year. As on the one hand, it is marked by a total absence of Persian influence and a decided tendency to sanskritised style, so on the other, by its preference of the classical language, it rises superior to the colloquialism and flatness of the *Dialogues*. The story with its framework is well-known When Bikramāditya dies, his throne, the precious gift of Indra who was pleased with the king's excellent qualities, is buried, and for a long time remains hidden. Many years afterwards, a peasant cultivating his land discovers that, when sitting on a platform in the midst of his field, he becomes endowed with the qualities of great discernment and decision. By the direction of Bhoja, the reigning monarch of the country, the ground is dug up, and the lost throne is duly discovered underneath the platform. When the king, in the midst of a large circle of courtiers, is about to take his seat there, the first image informs him, that without Bikramāditya's qualities, he is unworthy to occupy Bikramāditya's throne. Explanation ensues ; and a story is told by each one of the thirty-two images in succession, illustrative of the former king's great and good qualities and implying that a worthy successor to him has not yet been born amongst the sons of men. It is one of the most interesting collections of fables of this period[1] and the following extract from the beginning, relating

1 Yates gives no less than 14 stories from this book in his selection and Haughton gives 4.

to the finding and disposing of the magic throne, will serve as a specimen of its descriptive and narrative manner:

দৈবলৌকিকোভয় সামর্থ্য সম্পন্ন শ্রীবিক্রমাদিত্য নামে এক রাজাধিরাজ হইয়াছিলেন। দেবপ্রসাদলব্ধ দ্বাত্রিংশৎ পুত্তলিকাযুক্ত রত্নময় এক সিংহাসন তাঁহার বসিবার ছিল। ঐ শ্রীবিক্রমাদিত্য রাজার স্বর্গারোহণ পরে সেই সিংহাসনে বসিবার উপযুক্ত পাত্র কেহ না থাকাতে সিংহাসন মৃত্তিকার মধ্যে প্রোথিত হইয়াছিল। কিছু কাল পরে শ্রীভোজরাজার অধিকারের সময়ে ঐ সিংহাসন প্রকাশ হইল। তাহার উপাখ্যানের বিস্তার এই।—

দক্ষিণ দেশে ধারা নামে এক পুরী ছিল। সেই নগরের নিকটে সম্বদকর নামে এক শস্য ক্ষেত্র থাকে তাহার কৃষকের নাম যজ্ঞদত্ত সেই কৃষক শস্য ক্ষেত্রের চতুর্দিগে পরিখা করিয়া তাল তমাল পিয়াল হিন্তাল বকুল আম্র আম্রাতক চম্পক অশোক কিংশুক বক গুবাক নারিকেল নাগকেশর মাধবী মালতী যুথী জাতী সেবতী কদলী দাড়িমী তগর কুন্দ মল্লিকা দেবদারু প্রভৃতি নানা জাতীয় বৃক্ষ রোপণ করিয়া এক উদ্যান করিয়া আপনি সেই উদ্যানের মধ্যে থাকে। সেই উপবনের নিকট নিবিড় ভয়ানক বন ছিল। সে বন হইতে হস্তী ব্যাঘ্র মহিষ গাণ্ডার বানর বনশূকর শশক ভালুক হরিণাদি অনেক পশু জন্তু আসিয়া শস্য প্রত্যহ নষ্ট করে। এজন্য যজ্ঞদত্ত অত্যন্ত উদ্বিগ্ন হইয়া শস্যরক্ষার কারণ ক্ষেত্রের মধ্যে এক মঞ্চ করিয়া আপনি তথাতে থাকিল। মঞ্চের উপরে যতক্ষণ বসিয়া থাকে ততক্ষণ রাজাধিরাজের যেমত প্রতাপ ও শাসন ও মন্ত্রণা সেই মত প্রতাপ ও শাসন ও মন্ত্রণা কৃষক করে যখন মঞ্চহইতে নামে তখন জড়ের প্রায় থাকে। ইহা দেখিয়া কৃষকের পরিজন লোকেরা বড়ই বিস্মিত হইয়া পরস্পর কহে এ কি আশ্চর্য্য। এই বৃত্তান্ত লোক পরম্পরাতে ধারাপুরীর রাজা ভোজ শুনিলেন। অনন্তর রাজা কৌতুকাবিষ্ট হইয়া মন্ত্রীসামন্ত সৈন্য সেনাপতির সহিত মঞ্চের নিকটে গিয়া কৃষকের ব্যবহার প্রত্যক্ষ দেখিয়া আপনার অত্যন্ত বিশ্বাসপাত্র এক মন্ত্রীকে মঞ্চের উপরে বসাইলেন। সেই মন্ত্রী যাবৎ মঞ্চের উপরে থাকে তাবৎ রাজাধিরাজের প্রায় প্রতাপ ও শাসন ও মন্ত্রণা করে। ইহা দেখিয়া রাজা চমৎকৃত হইয়া বিচার করিলেন যে এ

শক্তি মঞ্চের নয় এবং কৃষকেরও নয় এবং মন্ত্রীর নয় কিন্তু এ স্থানের মধ্যে চমৎকার কোনহ বস্তু আছেন তাহারি শক্তিতে কৃষক রাজাধিরাজ প্রায় হয়। ইহা নিশ্চয় করিয়া দ্রব্যের উদ্ধার কারণ সেই স্থান খনন করিতে মহারাজ আজ্ঞা দিলেন। আজ্ঞা পাইয়া ভৃত্যবর্গেরা খনন করিল। তৎপর সেই স্থান হইতে প্রবাল মুক্তা মানিক্য হীরক সূর্য্যকান্ত চন্দ্রকান্ত নীলকান্ত পদ্মরাগ মনিগণেতে জড়িত বত্রিশ পুত্তলিকাতে শোভিত তেজোময় এক দিব্য রত্নসিংহাসন উঠিলেন। সেই সিংহাসনের তেজে রাজা ও রাজার পরিজন লোকেরা সিংহাসন প্রতি অবলোকন করিতে পারিলেন না। তৎপর রাজা হৃষ্টচিত্ত হইয়া আপনার রাজধানীতে সিংহাসন আনয়নের ইচ্ছা করিয়া ভৃত্যবর্গেরদিগকে আজ্ঞা করিলেন। আজ্ঞা পাইয়া ভৃত্যবর্গেরা সিংহাসন চালন কারণ অনেক যত্ন করিল সে স্থানহইতে সিংহাসন লড়িল না। তৎপর আকাশবাণী হইল যে হে রাজন্ নানাবিধ বস্ত্র অলঙ্কারাদি উপকরণ দিয়া এ সিংহাসনের পূজা বলি দান হোম কর তবে সিংহাসন উঠিবে তাহা শুনিয়া রাজা সেইরূপ করাতে সিংহাসন অনায়াসে উঠিলেন।—

তৎপর ধারা নামে নিজ রাজধানীতে সিংহাসন আনিয়া স্বর্ণ রূপ্য প্রবাল স্ফটিকময় স্তম্ভেতে শোভিত রাজসভা স্থানের মধ্যে স্থাপিত করিলেন। পরে রাজা সেই সিংহাসনে বসিতে ইচ্ছা করিয়া পণ্ডিত লোকেরদিগকে আনাইয়া শুভক্ষণ নিরূপণ করিয়া ভৃত্যবর্গেরদিগকে অভিষেক সামগ্রী আয়োজন করিতে আজ্ঞা করিলেন। ভৃত্যবর্গেরা আজ্ঞা পাইয়া দধি দুর্ব্বা চন্দন পুষ্প অগুরু কুঙ্কম গোরোচনা ছত্র তরাস চামর ময়ূরপুচ্ছ অস্ত্র শস্ত্র পতি পুত্রবতী স্ত্রীগণের হস্তেতে দর্পণাদি অধিবাস সামগ্রী সপ্তদ্বীপা পৃথিবীর চিহ্নেতে চিত্রিত এক ব্যাঘ্র চর্ম্ম এই সকল শাস্ত্রোক্ত রাজাভিষেকসামগ্রী আয়োজন করিয়া রাজার নিকটে নিবেদন করিল। তৎপর শ্রীভোজরাজ গুরু পুরোহিত ব্রাহ্মণ পণ্ডিতবর্গ মন্ত্রী সামন্ত সৈন্য সেনাপতিতে বেষ্টিত হইয়া সিংহাসনে বসিয়া অভিষিক্ত হইবার নিমিত্তে সিংহাসনের নিকটে উপস্থিত হইলেন ইত্যবসরে সিংহাসনের প্রথম পুত্তলিকা রাজাকে কহিতে লাগিলেন।—হে রাজন্ শুন যে রাজা গুণবান্ অত্যন্ত ধনবান্ অতিশয় দাতা অত্যন্ত দয়ালু অতি বড় শূর সাত্ত্বিক স্বভাব সদা উৎসাহশীল প্রবলপ্রতাপ হন সেই রাজা এই সিংহাসনে

বসিবার যোগ্য অন্য সামান্য রাজা উপযুক্ত নয়। ইহা শুনিয়া রাজা কহিলেন হে পুত্তলিকে আমি যাজ্ঞা মাত্রে উপযুক্ত পাত্র বুঝিয়া সার্দ্ধ লক্ষ স্বুবর্ণ দি অতএব আমা হইতে অধিক দাতা পৃথিবীতে অন্য কে আছে। ইহা শুনিয়া পুত্তলিকা উপহাস করিয়া কহিলেন। হে রাজন্ শুন যে লোক মহৎ হয় সে আপনার গুণ আপনি বর্ণনা করে না তুমি আপন গুণ আপনি ব্যাখ্যা করিলা ইহাতেই বুঝিলাম তুমি অতি ক্ষুদ্র।[1]

HIS HITOPADEŚ 1808

Mṛtyuñjay's next work of translation was that of *Hitopadeśa*.[2] The Sanskrit *Hitopadeśa*, than which there might be greater books in the world but none perhaps which has a more interesting literary history, seems to have, with strange prescience, gauged the literary or amusive requirements not only of its own but also of times to follow ; and consequently it seems to have always possessed a peculiar fascination for a host of translators of all periods of literary history. There are some half a dozen or more translations of this work between 1800 and 1850, and it is not necessary to bring under review all them. But this version being the work of Mṛtyuñjay possesses a peculiar interest of its own. The work was composed later than that of Goloknāth's *Hitopadeś*, and it exemplifies Mṛtyuñjay's earlier style. It would be interesting to compare Goloknāth's language, as shown in the specimen quoted above, with that of Mṛtyuñjay

1 pp. 2-8.

2 The copy we use is a third reprint at Srirāmpur (1814) and bears the following title-page: পঞ্চতন্ত্র প্রভৃতি নীতিশাস্ত্রহইতে উদ্ধৃত। মিত্রলাভ সুহৃদ্ভেদ বিগ্রহ সন্ধি। এতচ্চতুষ্টয়াবয়ব বিশিষ্ট হিতোপদেশ। বিষ্ণুশর্ম্ম কর্ত্তৃক সংগৃহীত। বাঙ্গালা ভাষাতে। মৃত্যুঞ্জয় শর্ম্মণা ক্রিয়তে। শ্রীরামপুরে তৃতীয় বার ছাপা হইল। ১৮১৪। pp. 1-146. We have not been able to get the first edition of this work. The copy in the British Museum Library (Blumhardt, *Catalogue*, p. 67 and p. 115) of the second edition (containing pp. 1-197) bears 1814 as the date of publication. There is mention of a "Hitopadeshu in Bengali 8vo. Serampore 1808" in the *Catalogue of the Library of the East India College* ; in the

in the following extract, bearing upon the same part of the story.[1]

পুস্তকারম্ভে বিঘ্নবিনাশের নিমিত্তে প্রথমতঃ প্রার্থনারূপ মঙ্গলাচরণ করিতেছেন।

জাহ্নবীর ফেণরেখার ন্যায় চন্দ্রকলা যাঁহার মস্তকে আছেন সে শিবের অনুগ্রহেতে সাধু লোকেরদিগের সাধ্য কর্ম্ম সিদ্ধ হউক।

শ্রুত যে এই হিতোপদেশ ইনি সংস্কৃত বাক্যেতে পটুতা ও সর্ব্বত্র বাক্যের বৈচিত্র্য ও নীতিবিদ্যা দেন। প্রাজ্ঞ লোক অজর ও অমরের ন্যায় হইয়া বিদ্যা এবং অর্থ চিন্তা করিবেক আর যমকর্তৃক কেশে গৃহীতের মত হইয়া ধর্ম্মাচরণ করিবেক। এবং সকল দ্রব্যের মধ্যে বিদ্যাই অত্যুত্তম দ্রব্য ইহা পণ্ডিতেরা কহিয়াছেন যেহেতুক বিদ্যার সর্ব্বকালে চৌরাদিকর্তৃক অহরণীয়ত্ব ও অমূল্যত্ব ও অক্ষয়ত্ব। আর বিদ্যা যদি নীচলোকের হয় তবে সেই মনুষ্যকে দুষ্প্রাপ্য রাজাকে পাওয়ান্ যেমন নীচগা নদী মনুষ্যকে দুষ্প্রাপ্য সমুদ্রকে পাওয়ান্ রাজার সঙ্গে মেলন হেতুক বিদ্যা উৎকৃষ্ট ভাগ্য পাওয়ান্। বিদ্যা বিনয় দেন বিনয়েতে পাত্রতা পায় পাত্রতাহইতে ধন পায় ধনহইতে ধর্ম্ম পায় ধর্ম্মহইতে সুখ পায়। শস্ত্রবিদ্যা ও শাস্ত্রবিদ্যা এই দুই বিদ্যা প্রতিপত্তির নিমিত্তে হন কিন্তু আদ্যা শস্ত্রবিদ্যা বৃদ্ধাবস্থাতে হাস্যের নিমিত্ত হন দ্বিতীয়া শাস্ত্রবিদ্যা সর্ব্বকালে আদরণীয়া হন অপর যেহেতুক নূতন পাত্রে সংলগ্ন যে চিহ্ন সে অন্যথা হয় না সেই হেতুক গল্পের ছলেতে বালকেরদের সম্বন্ধে এ গ্রন্থে নীতি কহা যাইতেছে মিত্রলাভ ও সুহৃদ্ভেদ ও বিগ্রহ ও সন্ধি এতচ্চতুষ্টয়াত্মক নীতিশাস্ত্র পঞ্চতন্ত্রহইতে ও আর২ গ্রন্থহইতে আকর্ষণ করিয়া লিখা যাইতেছে।

Catalogue of the Library of the Hon. East India Company, we find an entry of "Hitopadeshu or Salutary Instructions. 8vo. Serampore. 1808" without any mention of the name of the author. From the *Tenth Memoir*, relative to Serampore translations (Appendix), it is clear that the first edition of Mṛtyuñjay's *Hitopadeś* was published in 1808, and therefore the anonymous entries mentioned above must refer to this work.

1 হিতোপদেশ, pp. 3-8.

ভাগীরথী তীরে পাটলিপুত্র নামে নগর আছে সেখানে সকল রাজগুণে যুক্ত সুদর্শন নামে রাজা ছিলেন সেই ভূপতি এক সময় কাহারও কর্তৃক পঠ্যমান শ্লোকদ্বয় শ্রবণ করিলেন তাহার অর্থ এই অনেক সন্দেহের নাশক এবং অপ্রত্যক্ষ বিষয়ের জ্ঞাপক যে শাস্ত্র সে সকলের চক্ষু ইহা যাহার নাই সে অন্ধ। আর যৌবন ও ধনসম্পত্তি ও প্রভুত্ব ও অবিবেকতা এই চতুষ্টয় প্রত্যেককেও অনর্থের নিমিত্ত হয় যেখানে এ চতুষ্টয় সেখানে কি হয় কহিতে পারি না। ইহা শুনিয়া সে রাজা অজ্ঞাতশাস্ত্র এবং সর্ব্বদা বিপথগামী আপন পুত্রেরদিগের শাস্ত্রবিজ্ঞাপনার্থে উদ্বিগ্নচিত্ত হইয়া চিন্তা করিলেন। যে পুত্র পণ্ডিত ও ধার্ম্মিক নয় সে পুত্র হওয়াতে কি প্রয়োজন বরং অনর্থ হয় যেমন কাণ চক্ষুতে কিছু প্রয়োজন নাই প্রত্যুত কাণ চক্ষু কেবল পীড়ারি কারণ। এবং অজাত মৃত ও মূর্খ ইহার মধ্যে আদ্যদ্বয় ভাল অন্তিম ভাল নয় যেহেতুক আদ্যদ্বয় একবার দুঃখদায়ক হয় অন্তিম পুনঃ পদে২ দুঃখদায়ক হয়। অপর গর্ভস্রাবও ভাল স্ত্রীঅভিগমন না করাও ভাল জন্মিয়া মরাও ভাল কন্যা হওয়াও ভাল ভার্য্যা বন্ধ্যা হওয়াও ভাল গর্ভহইতে ভূমিষ্ঠ না হওয়াও ভাল রূপ ও ধনসমূহবিশিষ্ট মূর্খ পুত্র কিছু নয়। এবং যে পুত্র জন্মিলে বংশ উন্নতি পায় সে জন্মুক নতুবা জন্মমরণ ধর্ম্মশালি সংসারে কে মরিয়া না জন্মে। অপর গুণিসমূহ গণনারম্ভে সম্ভ্রমেতে খড়ী যাহার না পড়ে সে পুত্রেতে মাতা যদি পুত্রবতী হয় তবে কহ বন্ধ্যা কেমন হয়। এবং দান ও তপস্যা ও শৌর্য্য ও বিদ্যা ও ধনার্জনেতে যাহার মন সচেষ্ট না হয় সে মাতার বিষ্ঠামাত্র। এবং গুণবান এক পুত্রও ভাল শত২ মূর্খ পুত্রেতে প্রয়োজন নাই যেমন এক চন্দ্র অন্ধকার নষ্ট করেন তারাসমূহ কিছু করিতে পারে না।......................ইহা চিন্তা করিয়া সেই রাজা পণ্ডিতসভা করাইলেন অনন্তর রাজা কহিলেন ভো ভো পণ্ডিতেরা আমার কথা শ্রবণ করুন। আছে কেহ এমন পণ্ডিত যে নিত্য বিপথগামি অবিদিত-শাস্ত্র আমার পুত্রেরদের এখন নীতিশাস্ত্রোপদেশদ্বারা পুনর্জন্ম করাইতে সমর্থ হয়। যে হেতুক কাঞ্চন-সংসর্গেতে কাচ যেমন মরকতের দ্যুতি ধারণ করে তেমন পণ্ডিত-সন্নিধানেতে মূর্খও প্রবীণত্ব পায়। পণ্ডিতেরদের কর্তৃক সে প্রকার উক্ত হইয়াছে। হীন লোকেরদের সহিত বাসেতে মতি হীনা হয়

এবং স্বসমান লোকেরদের সহিত বাসেতে মতি সমতাকে পায় এবং উত্তম লোকেরদের সহিত বাসেতে মতি উত্তমতাকে পায়। ইহার মধ্যে বৃহস্পতি-তুল্য সকল নীতিশাস্ত্রের যথার্থজ্ঞাতা বিষ্ণুশর্ম্মনামে পণ্ডিত কহিলেন হে মহারাজ সৎকুলোদ্ভব এই রাজপুত্রেরা এইহেতুক আমাহইতে নীতিশাস্ত্র গ্রহণ করিতে শক্ত হইবেন যেহেতুক কোন ক্রিয়া অস্থানে পতিতা হইলে ফলবতী হয় না যেমন নানাপ্রকার যত্নেতে শুকপক্ষির ন্যায় বক পাঠিত হয় না। আর এ গোত্রে নির্গুণ সন্তান জন্মে না যেহেতুক পদ্মরাগমণির আকরেতে কাচমণির জন্ম কোথায় এইহেতুক আমি ছয় মাসের মধ্যে তোমার পুত্রেরদিগকে নীতিশাস্ত্রজ্ঞ করিব।

রাজা পুনর্ব্বার বিনয়পূর্ব্বক কহিলেন পুষ্পসহবাসেতে কীটও সল্লোকের মস্তকে আরোহণ করে এবং সল্লোকেরদের কর্তৃক সুপ্রতিষ্ঠিত প্রস্তরও দেবত্ব পায়। আর যেমন উদয়াচলস্থ দ্রব্য সূর্য্যসন্নিধানে দীপ্তি পায় তেমনি সৎসন্নিধানেতে হীনবর্ণও দীপ্তি পায় সেইহেতুক এই আমার পুত্রেরদিগকে নীতিশাস্ত্রোপদেশের নিমিত্ত তোমরাই প্রমাণ হইয়াছ। ইহা কহিয়া সেই বিষ্ণুশর্ম্মার বহু সন্মানপূর্ব্বক পুত্রেরদিগকে সমর্পণ করিলেন।

HIS RĀJĀBALI 1808

From a literary point of view, however, Mṛtyuñjay's two original works, *Rājābalī* and *Prabodh-chandrikā* are more interesting; and of these, *Rājābalī*, both in form and matter, is no doubt the better work. The *Rājābalī* as its name implies, is the 'history of the kings' who ruled in this country from the earliest time; and its full title will sufficiently explain its scope[1]:—রাজাবলী। অর্থাৎ কলির প্রারম্ভ হইতে ইংরাজের অধিকার পর্য্যন্ত ভারতবর্ষের রাজা ও সম্রাটদের সংক্ষেপ ইতিহাস। The work is, however, based more on tradition than on authentic history. The introductory portion gives the story of the ancient Hindu kings since the days of Kurukṣetra, based mostly on the

1 The title-page says: রাজাবলী। সংগ্রহ ভাষাতে। মৃত্যুঞ্জয় শর্ম্মণা ক্রিয়তে। শ্রীরামপুরে ছাপা হইল। ১৮০৮। pp. 1-295. Second Ed. Serampore 1814, pp. 1-221; 4th Ed. Serampore 1836.

Purāṇic accounts and traditionary legends ; and of these the account of king Bikramāditya is the longest and most entertaining. The story comes down to the historic times of the Muhammedan conquest, and there is some account of Ādiśūr, Ballāl Sen, Lakṣmaṇ Sen of Bengal and Pṛthu and Jayachandra of Delhi and Kanauj. Then follows a sketch of the Pathan and Mughal kings of Delhi, and of these the stories of Akbar, Jahāngīr, Shāh Jahān and Aurangzeb will be found interesting. These accounts, however, are not strictly historical but there is a considerable infusion of gossip and fiction. The work ends with an account of the British occupation of Bengal after the defeat of Sirājuddaulah, worth comparison with that given by Rājīblochan in *Mahārāj Kṛṣṇa Chandra Rāyasya Charitram.* The concluding passage is interesting: এইরূপে নন্দবংশজাত বিশারদ অবধি শাহআলম বাদ্‌শাহ পর্য্যন্ত ও মুনইমখাঁ নবাব অবধি নবাব কাসমলী খাঁ পর্য্যন্ত কোন২ সম্রাট্ রাজারদের ও নবাবেরদের ও তাঁহারদের চাকর লোকেরদের স্বামিদ্রোহাদি নানাবিধ পাপেতে এই হিন্দুস্থানের বিনাশোম্মুখ হওয়াতে পরমেশ্বরের ইচ্ছামতে ঐ হিন্দুস্থানের রক্ষার্থ আরোপিত কম্পনি বাহাদুরের অধিকাররূপ বৃক্ষের পুষ্পিতত্ব ও ফলিতত্ত্বের সমবধায়ক যে বড় সাহেব তৎকর্তৃক ঐ কম্পনি বাহাদুরের অধিকাররূপ বৃক্ষের আলবালস্বে নিরূপিত পাঠশালার পণ্ডিত শ্রীমৃত্যুঞ্জয় শর্ম্মকর্তৃক গৌড়ীয় ভাষাতে রচিত রাজতরঙ্গ নামে গ্রন্থ সমাপ্ত হইল। There are numerous anecdotes, but the story is presented in a connected form and the style is marked by narrative ease and simplicity, although at places where the author grows serious, it becomes laboured and pedantic. The style of Mṛtyuñjay, however, has a distinction of its own when contrasted with those of his contemporaries. It shows a decided leaning to Sanskrit words and Sanskritic forms, just as the styles of Carey, Rām Rām Basu, or Chaṇḍīcharaṇ show a return to the colloquial language. In Mṛtyuñjay's writings, there is an attempt to raise the language from the negligence of colloquialism to the dignity and seriousness of a literary language; while in Carey and others, the desire is always to be clear, popular,

and useful. But it must be admitted that in the more serious portions of Mṛtyuñjay's writings, the preponderance of Sanskrit words and Sanskrit forms makes the syntax inartistic and the style stiff and unnatural. In the narrative portions, however, this fault disappears, and the general manner in this work, although bordering on the pedantic, is indeed interesting, of which the following short passage taken from the account of Pṛthu and Jayachandra will serve as a specimen[1]:

পৃথুরাজার পর যবনেতে যে প্রকারে দ্বিল্লীতে অধিকার করিল তাহা লিখি।

কান্যকুব্জ দেশের রাজা জয়চন্দ্র রাঠোর মহাবলপরাক্রম ছিলেন এবং বড় ধনী ছিলেন কাহাকে বলেতে কাহাকে প্রীতিতে এইরূপে প্রায় কুমারিকাখণ্ডস্থ সকল রাজাকে আপন বশীভূত করিয়া ছিলেন তাঁহার অনঙ্গমঞ্জরী নামে অপূর্ব্ব সুন্দরী এক কন্যা ছিলেন তাঁহার বিবাহের নিমিত্তে যে যে বর উপস্থিত হয় তাহারদের মধ্যে কেহ তাঁহার মনোনীত হইল না। পরে রাজা এক দিবস উদ্বিগ্ন হইয়া কন্যাকে জিজ্ঞাসা করিলেন যে আমি তোমার বিবাহের নিমিত্তে যে বর উপস্থিত করি সে তোমার মনোনীত হয় না ইহাতে তোমার মনস্থ কি তাহা আমাকে কহ আমি তদনুরূপ করি। রাজকন্যা এই কথা শুনিয়া কহিলেন হে মহারাজ আপনি আমার কর্ত্তা আপনকার যে মনস্থ তাহাই হইতে পারে আমার মনস্থে কি করে তবে আপন মনস্থ যাহা তাহা আজ্ঞানুসারে কহি আপনি সম্প্রতি অতি বড় রাজা যাহা ইচ্ছা করেন তাহাই করিতে পারেন আমি আপনকার কন্যা ইহার মত বিবাহ হইলে বড় ভাল হয় ইহাতে আমি এই মনে করিয়াছি আপনি এক রাজসূয় যজ্ঞ আরম্ভ করুন তাহাতে সকল রাজারদের নিমন্ত্রণ করুন তবে সকল রাজারা অবশ্য আসিবেন সেই রাজারদের মধ্যে আপন মনোনীত যে রাজাকে দেখিব তাহাকে স্বয়ং বরণ করিব। রাজা কন্যার এই বাক্য শুনিয়া রাজসূয় যজ্ঞের আরম্ভ করিয়া সকল রাজারদের নিমন্ত্রণ করিলেন। সে নিমন্ত্রণে কুমারিকাখণ্ডস্থ সকল রাজারা আইলেন কিন্তু দ্বিল্লীর পৃথুরাজার আগমন কালে তাঁহার প্রাচীন

1 রাজাবলী, pp. 100-106.

এক চাকর তাঁহাকে কহিল হে মহারাজ রাজসূয় যজ্ঞের নিমন্ত্রণে গেলে কররূপে কিছু দিতে হয় আপনি দিল্লীর রাজা আপনি যে অন্য রাজাকে কিছু কর দেন সে ভাল নয় তবে প্রীতিতে যজ্ঞসমাপনার্থে কিছু দিলেও লোকত অপ্রতিষ্ঠা হইবে অতএব এ নিমন্ত্রণে আপনকার যাওয়া উপযুক্ত নয়। রাজা এই কথাতে সেই নিমন্ত্রণে আইলেন না। কান্যকুব্জের রাজা জয়চন্দ্র এই কথা শুনিতে পাইয়া অন্তঃকরণে অতি ক্রুদ্ধ হইলেন ও সভাস্থ পণ্ডিত লোকেরদিগকে জিজ্ঞাসা করিলেন দিল্লীর রাজা আইলেন না যজ্ঞ সমাপন কিরূপে হয়। পণ্ডিতেরা কহিলেন রাজসূয় যজ্ঞের অঙ্গ রাজারা হন অঙ্গের অভাবে প্রতিনিধিতেও প্রধান কর্ম্ম সিদ্ধ হয় অতএব দিল্লীর রাজার প্রতিনিধি এক স্বর্ণ প্রতিমা নির্ম্মাণ করুন পূর্ব্বে সূর্য্যবংশীয় রামচন্দ্র নামে এক মহারাজ হইয়াছিলেন তিনি নৈমিষারণ্যে যখন যজ্ঞের আরম্ভ করিয়াছিলেন তাহার পূর্ব্ব কিছু দিন কোনহ কারণেতে আপন স্ত্রী সীতাকে বনবাস দিয়াছিলেন অতএব যজ্ঞ কালে তাঁহার স্ত্রী ছিলেন না এই প্রযুক্ত বশিষ্ঠ জাবালি প্রভৃতি মহামুনিরা রামচন্দ্রের স্ত্রীর প্রতিনিধিরূপে এক স্বর্ণ প্রতিমা নির্ম্মাণ করাইয়া যজ্ঞ করাইয়াছিলেন আপনিও সেইমত করুন যজ্ঞ আরম্ভ করিয়া সমাপন না করিলে বড়ই দোষ। রাজা পণ্ডিতেরদের এই বাক্যেতে পৃথুরাজার প্রতিনিধিরূপে এক স্বর্ণ প্রতিমা করিয়া ঐ প্রতিমাকে দ্বারি রূপে স্থাপন করিলেন কেননা রাজসূয় যজ্ঞে নিমন্ত্রিত যে যে রাজারা আসিয়া থাকেন তাঁহারা উপযুক্ত মত কেহ কোনহ কর্ম্ম করিয়া থাকেন। জয়চন্দ্র রাজা পৃথুরাজার না আসাতে ক্রুদ্ধ হইয়াছিলেন অতএব তাঁহার প্রতিমাকে অনুপযুক্ত কর্ম্মে স্থাপন করিলেন। ইহা পৃথুরাজা শুনিতে পাইয়া সসৈন্যে কান্যকুব্জ দেশে আসিয়া জয়চন্দ্র রাজার অনেক সৈন্য নষ্ট করিয়া ঐ স্বর্ণ প্রতিমা লইয়া গেলেন। তদনন্তর রাজা জয়চন্দ্র কোনহ প্রকারে যজ্ঞ সমাপন করিয়া অত্যন্ত অপমানিত হইয়া রহিলেন। এই প্রকারে পৃথুরাজাকে বড় বলবান ও রূপবান দেখিয়া রাজকন্যা যে যে রাজারা আসিয়াছিল তাহারদের মধ্যে কাহাকেও স্বয়ম্বরণ না করিয়া কহিলেন যে আমি পৃথুরাজা ব্যতিরেকে অন্য রাজাকে বরণ করিব না। জয়চন্দ্র রাজা আপন কন্যার এই নিশ্চয় জানিয়া কন্যার উপর অত্যন্ত ক্রুদ্ধ হইয়া কন্যাকে আপন বাটী হইতে দূর করিয়া দিলেন

ও কহিলেন তোর যাহা ইচ্ছা তাহাই কর গিয়া। রাজকন্যা অন্য কোনহ অন্তরঙ্গ লোকের বাটীতে আসিয়া রহিলেন। এ সকল বিষয় পৃথুরাজা শুনিতে পাইয়া চন্দ্রনামে এক ভাটকে জয়চন্দ্র রাজার নিকটে পাঠাইয়া দিলেন। ও এক পত্র লিখিলেন তাহার পাঠ এই হে মহারাজ জয়চন্দ্র তোমার কন্যা আমাকে বিবাহ করিতে মনস্থ করিয়াছেন তাঁহার যে এ মনস্থ সে উপযুক্ত বটে কিন্তু তুমি যে ইহাতে তাঁহার প্রতি ক্রুদ্ধ হইয়াছ সে অত্যন্ত অনুচিত করিয়াছ তোমার কন্যার মনস্থ অন্যথা কখনও হইবে না ইহা নিশ্চয় জানিবা। এইরূপ পত্র দিয়া চন্দ্রভাটকে পাঠাইয়া আপনিও সসৈন্যে কান্যকুব্জ দেশে প্রস্থান করিলেন চন্দ্রভাট জয়চন্দ্র রাজার কাছে গিয়া সে পত্র দিলেন। কিন্তু জয়চন্দ্র রাজা সে পত্রার্থ অবগত হইয়া কিছু উত্তর দিলেন না। পৃথু রাজা চন্দ্রভাটের প্রমুখাৎ ইহা জ্ঞাতা হইয়া আপন যোগ্যতাতে রাজকন্যাকে লইয়া দিল্লীতে প্রস্থান করিলেন। পৃথুরাজার সৈন্য সকল কনোজেতে থাকিল পশ্চাৎ জয়চন্দ্র রাজা ইহা শুনিতে পাইয়া সসৈন্যে আসিয়া পৃথুরাজার সৈন্যের সহিত বড় যুদ্ধ করিলেন। এ যুদ্ধে দুই দিগেতে ৭০০০ সাত হাজার লোক নষ্ট হইল। জয়চন্দ্র রাজা আপনার অনেক লোক নষ্ট হওয়াতে যুদ্ধ হইতে বিরত হইয়া প্রস্থান করিলেন। পৃথু রাজার অবশিষ্ট সৈন্য দিল্লীতে আসিয়া পৌছিল। এইরূপে পৃথু রাজার ও জয়চন্দ্র রাজার বড় শত্রুতা হইল।

HIS PRABODH-CHANDRIKĀ 1813

The *Prabodh-chandrikā*[1] or Moon-light of Intelligence, his next great original work, is indeed a most interesting publication of this period from the standpoint of form and language, if not for its matter. It is an elaborate treatise of some length

1 This work, though composed in 1813, was not published till 1833, when it appeared from the Serampore Press with a Preface by J. C. Marshman (dated 15th May, 1833). The title page says: "প্রবোধচন্দ্রিকা। শ্রীমৃত্যুঞ্জয় বিদ্যালঙ্কার কর্ত্তৃক ফোর্টউইলিয়ম কালেজের ছাত্রেরদের নিমিত্ত রচিত। শ্রীরামপুর মুদ্রাযন্ত্রালয়ে মুদ্রাঙ্কিত হইল। ১৮৩৩। pp. 1-195. The Prabodh Chundrika compiled by the late Mṛtyuñjoy Vidyulunkar, many years Chief Pundit in the College of Fort William. From the Serampore Press. 1833", pp. i xi and 1-195. The fount is very neat and clear. There was a second edition at Serampore in 1845 as

divided into four parts called স্তবক, each of which again is subdivided into chapters called কুসুম. The book begins with the praise of language, which, however, as quoted below, will not be found very entertaining for its stiff and pedantic style, but will somewhat exemplify and explain the Pundit's preference for Sanskrit:

অকারাদি ক্ষকারান্তাক্ষরমালা যদ্যপি পঞ্চাশৎ সংখ্যকা কিম্বা একপঞ্চাশৎ কিম্বা সপ্তপঞ্চাশৎ সংখ্যা পরিমিতা হউক তথাপি এতাবন্মাত্র কতিপয় বর্ণাবলী-বিন্যাসবিশেষবশতঃ বৈদিক লৌকিক সংস্কৃত প্রাকৃত পৈশাচাদি অষ্টাদশ ভাষা ও নানাদেশীয় মনুষ্য জাতীয় ভাষাবিশেষবশতঃ অনেক প্রকার ভাষাবৈচিত্র্য শাস্ত্রতো লোকতঃ প্রসিদ্ধ আছে। যেমন কুঞ্জরধ্বনিতুল্য ধ্বনি নিষাদ স্বর। গোরবানুকারি ঋষভ স্বর। অজাশব্দ সদৃশ গান্ধার স্বর। ময়ূররবাকার ষড়জ স্বর। ক্রৌঞ্চস্বনোপম মধ্যম স্বর। অশ্বস্বনসঙ্কাশ ধৈবত স্বর। কুসুমসময়কালীন কোকিলকাকলীতুলিত পঞ্চম স্বররূপ সপ্তমাত্র সংখ্যক স্বর সংস্থানবিশেষবশতঃ অসংখ্যাত গানবৈচিত্র্য শাস্ত্রতো লোকতঃ প্রসিদ্ধ আছে। এতদ্রূপ প্রসিদ্ধ সর্ব্বভাষা চতুর্ব্ব্যূহরূপা হন।

অনভিব্যক্তবর্ণা ধ্বনিমাত্ররূপা পরানাম্নী ভাষা প্রথমা যেমন অভিনব কুমারেরদের ভাষা। তদনন্তর অভিব্যক্তবর্ণমাত্রা পশ্যন্তীনামক ভাষা দ্বিতীয়া যেমন প্রাপ্তযৎকিঞ্চিদ্বয়স্ক বালকবাণী। তৎপর পদমাত্রাত্মক মধ্যমাভিধা

the *Catalogue of Bengali Printed Books in the Library of the British Museum* p. 67 shows. Another edition in the Sāhitya Pariṣat Library is dated 1862, Serampore. Also another edition 1862, with the following title-page in English and Bengali: "The Prabodh Chandrika compiled by the Late Mrityunjoy Bidyalankar for many years Chief Pundit in the College of Fort William, Calcutta. Printed for the Calcutta University at the Baptist Mission Press 1862. প্রবোধচন্দ্রিকা। শ্রীযুত মৃত্যুঞ্জয় বিদ্যা-লঙ্কার কর্ত্তৃক বিরচিতা। কলিকাতা ইউনিবর্সিটীর অনুমত্যনুসারে ব্যাপটিষ্ট মিসন যন্ত্রালয়ে মুদ্রাঙ্কিতা হইল। শকাব্দা ১৭৮৪।" All these editions may be seen in the Sāhitya Pariṣat Library. The *Prabodh-chandrikā* is published by Brajendranath Banerji in the collected works of Mṛtyuñjaya (মৃত্যুঞ্জয় গ্রন্থাবলী) published by Sajaniktanta Das, Ranjan Publishing House, Calcutta B.S. 1346.

তৃতীয়া ভাষা যেমন পূর্ব্বোক্ত বালকাধিক কিঞ্চিদ্বয়স্ক শিশু ভাষা। তারপর বাক্যরূপ বৈখরী নামধেয়া সকল শাস্ত্রস্বরূপা বিবিধ জ্ঞানপ্রকাশিকা সর্ব্বব্যবহার প্রদর্শিকা চতুর্থী ভাষা যেমন লৌকিক শাস্ত্রীয় ভাষা। ঈদৃশরূপে জাতমাত্র বালকের উত্তরোত্তর বয়োবৃদ্ধিক্রমে ক্রমশঃ প্রবর্ত্তমানা চতুর্ব্ব্যূহরূপা ভাষা অস্মদাদিতে যুগপৎ প্রবর্ত্তমানত্ব রূপে যদ্যপি প্রতীয়মানা হউন তথাপি পূর্ব্বোক্ত পরা পশ্যন্তী মধ্যমা বৈখরীরূপ চতুর্ব্ব্যূহরূপেতেই প্রবর্ত্তমানা হউন।

ইহার প্রমাণ এই। দূরবর্ত্তি হট্টগামি লোকেরদের শ্রবণবিষয়ীভূত হট্টাগত ধ্বনিমাত্রাত্মক কেবল কোলাহল হয়। অনন্তর কতিপয় পথ গমনোত্তর সমনস্ক শ্রবণেন্দ্রিয় সন্নিকর্ষবশতঃ খণ্ডশঃ বর্ণমাত্র গ্রহণ হয়। তদুত্তর বসন ভূষণ কদলী মূলক ইত্যাদি পদমাত্র শ্রবণ হয়। তদনন্তর হট্টনিকট প্রাপ্ত্যুত্তর ক্রয়বিক্রয়কারি পুরুষেরদের বাক্যশ্রুতি হয়। অতএব অস্মদাদিভাষা চতুর্ব্ব্যূহরূপে প্রবর্ত্তমানভাষাত্বহেতুক পূর্ব্বোক্তক্রম হট্টস্থ পুরুষভাষার ন্যায় ইত্যনুমানে সকল মানুষভাষার চতুর্ব্ব্যূহরূপত্ব নিশ্চয় হয়। তবে যে অস্মদাদির ভাষার যুগপৎ বৈখরীরূপতামাত্র প্রতীতি সে উচ্চারণ ক্রিয়ার অতি শীঘ্রতাপ্রযুক্ত উপর্য্যধোভাবাবস্থিত কোমলতর বহুল কমলদল সূচীবেধন ক্রিয়ার মত। এতদ্রূপে প্রবর্ত্তমান সকল ভাষা হইতে সংস্কৃত ভাষা উত্তমা বহু বর্ণময়ত্বপ্রযুক্ত এক দ্ব্যক্ষর পশুপক্ষিভাষা হইতে বহুতরাক্ষর মনুষ্য ভাষার মত ইত্যনুমানে সংস্কৃত ভাষা সর্ব্বোত্তমা এই নিশ্চয়। অন্যান্য দেশীয় ভাষা হইতে গৌড়দেশীয় ভাষা উত্তমা সর্ব্বোত্তমা সংস্কৃত ভাষা বাহুল্যহেতুক। যেমন দুই এক পণ্ডিতাধিষ্ঠিত দেশহইতে বহুতর পণ্ডিতাধিষ্ঠিত দেশ উত্তম ইত্যনুমানে সকল লৌকিক ভাষার মধ্যে উত্তম গৌড়ীয় ভাষাতে অভিনব যুবক সাহেবজাতের শিক্ষার্থে কোন পণ্ডিত প্রবোধচন্দ্রিকা নামে গ্রন্থ রচিতেছেন। ইতি প্রবোধচন্দ্রিকায়াং মুখবন্ধে ভাষা প্রশংসা নাম প্রথম কুসুমং।[1]

Then King Baijpāl, son of Bikramāditya, summons his young and frolicsome child Śrīdharādhara before him and, in order to infuse in the son a love of learning, begins a

1 প্রবোধচন্দ্রিকা pp. 1-2. The original punctuation and separation of words have been preserved.

discussion on the subject. Afterwards he entrusts the instruction of his son to Āchārya Prabhākar, who to educate his young pupil begins by lecturing to him in a stiff and laboured language upon every conceivable subject beginning with the philosophy of the alphabet, rules of grammar, rhetoric, law, logic, astronomy, politics and various other branches of useful knowledge, and finishing the whole by salutary instructions illustrated by popular tales. As Carey remarks: "It is a sketch of the whole cycle of Hindoo literature, illustrated by familiar examples, and interspersed with anecdotes intended to exemplify the different sciences described therein." The book is indeed a monument of learning and written also in a learned language.

But the book, inspite of its learning, has no system, and the writer is almost wholly devoid of all artistic instincts of proportion or arrangement. The serious is mingled up with the comic, abstruse metaphysical speculation is put side by side with the low talk of peasants, mechanics and quarrelsome women, and often there is a sudden and ludicrous descent from the most pedantic and laboured language to the extreme vulgarity of the popular dialect. It is indeed a a hotch-potch—a curious collection of tales and serious essays, bound together by a very slender thread.

IMPORTANCE OF ITS PROSE: DIFFERENT KINDS OF STYLE

Nor is the language of the book all that could be desired. In the preface to the work Marshman remarks very significantly that "any person who can comprehend the present work and enter into the spirit of its beauties, may justly consider himself master of the language". But to comprehend the present work would mean some familiarity with Sanskrit, without which the book would not be easily intelligible. But the tendency to sanskritising has been carried to the extreme. Indeed *Prabodh-chandrikā* exemplifies one important aspect of the development of prose style in this

period and brings into clear relief the long-continued struggle between the plain and the ornate style out of which is evolved modern prose—the plain style favoured by the European writers and their imitators, while the ornate style advocated by learned Pundits of the orthodox school like Mṛtyuñjay. The language is correct and absolutely free from the taint of Persian, and Marshman's eulogy that the book is "written in the purest Bengalee" is perfectly justifiable; but when that learned missionary and scholar speaks of its Bengali as "one of the most beautiful specimens" of prose style, it is obvious that he stretches his point too far. Preponderance of Sanskrit words indeed gives strength and variety to the prose as well as purity and correctness to the diction, but the sesquipedalian affectation of laboured style becomes wearisome in a short time. The use of long-drawn-out compound words, occurrence of unusual phrases and extensive borrowing from Sanskrit make it difficult sometimes for the uninitiated to comprehend the sentences at the first glance. In the technical or philosophical portions again the style sometimes assumes a peculiar stiffness and learned tone.[1] In some places, the sentences are so very lengthy and irregular in structure and arrangement that it becomes almost impossible to find out their meaning easily; while in other places, the writer, anxious to exhibit a variety of style, has indulged in the use of language current only among the lower orders "the vulgarity of which, however," says Marshman, "he has abundantly redeemed by his vein of original humour." In this work the student may range at will over all kinds of Bengali prose of this period from the highest to the lowest, although the Sanskritised style preponderates: from sentences so studded with Sanskrit combinations as to be almost unintelligible to those who have not learnt the classical language down to vulgar abuse and colloquial freedom. We have already seen

1 See for instance প্রথম স্তবক, তৃতীয় ও চতুর্থ কুসুম। দ্বিতীয় স্তবক, প্রথম কুসুম।

a specimen of its more difficult style; the following extract will be a good illustration of the author's use of the colloquial language[1]:

বাটীর নিকটে গিয়া [বিশ্ব বঞ্চক] আপন স্ত্রীকে ডাকিল ও ঠকের মা ওরে দৌড়িয়া শীঘ্র আয় মাথাহইতে ভার নামা আজি এক ব্যাটাকে বড় ঠকাইয়াছি। তাহার স্ত্রী গতিক্রিয়া কহিল ওগো আমি যাইতে পারিবো না আমার হাত যোড়া আছে। তৎপতি বিশ্ববঞ্চক আলয়ে আসিয়া স্ত্রীকে কহিল আয় এই নে আজি বড় মজা হইয়াছে দিব্য সার গুড় এক কুপা পাওয়া গিয়াছে এক বেটা লক্ষ্মীছাড়া আপন এই গুড় ফেলাইয়া আমার সেই ঘিএর ঘড়া জানিস্‌তো তাহা নিয়া অমনি প্রস্থান করিয়াছে মনে২ বড় হর্ষ হইয়াছে যে আজি যথেষ্ট ঘৃত পাইলাম পশ্চাৎ টের পাইবে যা শীঘ্র রাঁধাবাড়া কর আমি নাইয়াই আসিয়াছি ক্ষুধাতে পেট জ্বলিতেছে। স্ত্রী কহিল গুড় হইলেই কি রাঁধা হয় তেল নাই লুন নাই চাউল নাই তরকারিপাতি কিছুই নাই কাঠগুলা সকলি ভিজা বেসাতি বা কিরূপে হবে তাতে আবার বৌ ছুঁড়ি অশুদ্ধা হইয়াছে কুটনা বা কে কুটিবে বাটনা বা কে বাটিবে। তৎপতি কহিল আজি কি ঘরে কিছুই নাই দেখদেখি খুদকুঁড়া যদি কিছু থাকে তবে তার পিঠা কর এই গুড় দিয়া খাইব। ইহাতে তাহার স্ত্রী কহিল বটে পিঠা করা বুঝি বড় সোঝা জান না পিঠা আঠা যেমন আঠা লাগিলে শীঘ্র ছাড়ে না তেমনি পিঠার লেঠা বড় লেঠা শীঘ্র ছাড়েনা কখনোতো রাঁধিয়া খাও নাই আর লোকের-দের মাউগের মতন মাউগ পাইয়া থাকিতে তবে জানিতে।

ইহা শুনিয়া বিশ্ববঞ্চক কহিল তবে কি আজি খাওয়া হবে না ক্ষুধায় কি মরিব। তৎপত্নী কহিল মরুকম্যানে আজি কি পিঠা না খাইলেই নয় দেখিদেখি হাড়ীকুঁড়ী খুদকুঁড়া যদি কিছু থাকে। ইহা কহিয়া ঘর হইতে খুদকুঁড়া আনিয়া বাটিতে বসিয়া কহিল শীলটা ভাল বটে লোড়াটা যা ইচ্ছা তা এতে কি চিকণ বাটনা হয় মরুক যেমন হউক বাটিত। ইহা কহিয়া খুদকুঁড়া বাটিয়া কহিল বাটাতো একপ্রকার হইল আলুনি পিঠা

1 প্রবোধচন্দ্রিকা, pp. 65-66.

খাইবা না লুণ তেল আনিতে হইবে। গতিক্রিয়ার এই কথা শুনিয়া বিশ্ববঞ্চক কহিল ওরে বাছা ঠক তৈল লবণ কোথাহইতে গোছেগাছে কিছু আন। ইহা শুনিয়া ঠক নামে তৎপুত্র কোন পড়সীর এক ছালিয়াকে আয় আমার সঙ্গে তোকে মোয়া দিব এইরূপে ভুলাইয়া সঙ্গে লইয়া বাজারে গিয়া এক মুদির দোকানে ঐ বালককে বন্ধক রাখিয়া তৈল লবণ লইয়া ঘরে আইল। তৎপিতা জিজ্ঞাসিল কিরূপে তেল লবণ আনিলি ঠক কহিল এক ছোঁড়াকে ভুলাইয়া বন্ধক দিয়া মুদি শালাকে ঠকিয়া আনিলাম ইহা শুনিয়া তৎপিতা কহিল হাঁ মোর বাছা এই তো বটে না হবে কেন আমার পুত্র ভাল অন্ন করিয়া খাইতে পারিবে। এইরূপে পুত্রের ধন্যবাদ করিয়া ভার্য্যাকে কহিল ওলো মাগি যা যা শীঘ্র পিঠা করিগা ক্ষুধাতে বাঁচি না।

It will be seen, however, that his narrative and descriptive manner as well as his power of weaving dialogues into his story is really praiseworthy for his time. But it must not be supposed that between these extremes of colloquialism on the one hand and academic pedantry on the other, Mṛtyuñjay never succeeded in steering a middle course. On the contrary, from the following extract it will be seen that his narrative style, though sanskritised, often assumes an ease and dignity reminding one of the later style of Bidyāsāgar[1]:

দণ্ডকারণ্যে প্রাচীনদীতীরে বহুকালাবধি এক তপস্বী তপস্যা করেন বিবিধ কৃচ্ছ্রসাধ্য তপঃ করিয়াও তপঃসিদ্ধিভাগী হন না। দৈবাৎ ঐ তপোধনের তপোবনেতে এক দিবস নারদমুনি আসিয়া উপস্থিত হইলেন। ঐ তপস্বী বহুমানপুরঃসর পাদ্যার্ঘ্যাসন দান ও স্বাগত প্রশ্ন করিয়া নারদমুনিকে নিবেদন করিলেন। হে ঈশ্বরদর্শি মুনি বহুকাল ব্যতীত হইল আমি তপস্যা করিতেছি তপঃসিদ্ধি হয় না কতকালে আমার তপঃসিদ্ধি হইবে ইহা আপনি ঈশ্বরসমীপে জানিয়া আমাকে আজ্ঞা করিবেন। তাপসের এই বাক্য শুনিয়া নারদমুনি ঈশ্বরসন্নিধানে গিয়া তাহার কথা নিবেদন করিলেন। ঈশ্বর আজ্ঞা করিলেন ঐ তাপসের তপোবনোপকণ্ঠে

1 প্রবোধচন্দ্রিকা, pp. 56-57.

যে অতিবৃহৎ তিন্তিড়ী বৃক্ষ আছে সে বৃক্ষের যত পত্র তত শত বৎসরে তার তপস্যাসিদ্ধি হইবে। ঈশ্বরের এই আজ্ঞা নারদ শুনিয়া ঐ তপোধনকে কহিলেন তপোধন শুনিবামাত্র পরমাহ্লাদে উর্দ্ধবাহু হইয়া নৃত্য করিতে লাগিলেন ও কহিলেন ভাল কথনো হউক আমার তপঃসিদ্ধি হইবেতো তপস্বী এইরূপে অত্যন্ত হৃষ্টান্তঃকরণ হইয়া নারদমুনির নিকটে বসিয়া আছেন ইত্যবসরে পরমেশ্বর স্বয়ং ঐ তাপসের আশ্রমে আসিয়া তাহাকে দর্শন দিয়া কহিলেন। হে তাপস অদ্য তোমার তপঃসিদ্ধি হইল তাহার বিলম্বের কারণ যে সকল পাপ ছিল তাহা তোমার নিষ্ঠার এতাদৃশী পরাকাষ্ঠাতে সন্তুষ্ট হইয়া তোমাকে ক্ষমা করিলাম এইরূপে ঐ তপস্বিকে তপঃসিদ্ধি বর প্রদান করিয়া ঈশ্বর অন্তর্হিত হইলেন। তদনন্তর নারদমুনি ঐ তপোধনকে কহিলেন হে তপস্বি কার্য্যসিদ্ধির কালের কিছু ইয়ত্তা নাই কিন্তু পুরুষের বিশ্বাস-পূর্ব্বক আত্যান্তিক নিষ্ঠাতে সন্তুষ্ট পরমেশ্বরের প্রসাদ যখন হয় তখনি কার্য্য-সিদ্ধি হয় দ্বৈধ যাবৎ থাকে তাবৎ পর্য্যন্ত কার্য্যসিদ্ধি হইতে পারে না।

HARAPRASĀD RĀY: HIS PURUṢ-PARĪKṢĀ 1815

The last though not the least important work of this period is *Puruṣ-parīkṣā* or the Trial of Man composed by Haraprasād Rāy and published by the Śrīrāmpur Press in 1815.[1] It is a pretty large volume and contains 52

1 The title-page says:—শ্রীযুত বিদ্যাপতি পণ্ডিত কর্ত্তৃক সংস্কৃত বাক্যে সংগৃহীতা পুরুষ পরীক্ষা। হরপ্রসাদ রায় কর্ত্তৃক বাঙ্গালা ভাষাতে রচিতা। শ্রীরামপুরে ছাপা হইল। ১৮১৫। pp. 1-273. William Carey in a letter dated March 22, 1815, writes to Capt. Roebuck, Asst. Secretary to the Council: "Hura Prusada, a Pandit on the Bengalee fluctuating establishment has translated a Sanskrit work called Pooroosha Pareeksha into the Bengalee language which he intends to print if he can obtain the usual encouragement of a subscription of 100 copies." The Council agreed (March 30, 1815) to subscribe to 100 copies of the book. Of Haraprasād Rāy's life. little seems to be known. Long (*Return of the Names and Writings*, etc , 1855) speaks of him as "Haraprasad Ray of Kanchrapara." The copy in the British Museum Library (Blumhardt, *Catalogue*, p. 113) of the first edition bears the same title-page, date and place of publication as we have quoted above; but there is also another edition in the same Library reprinted at London in 1826. And

stories[1] translated from a Sanskrit original said to have been composed by the poet Bidyāpati at the command of Rājā Śibasiṃha. Its object is not only to impart ethical instruction[2] by extolling and illustrating the virtues of men, but also to entertain by clever and amusing stories; and this is set forth at the beginning of the work:—অভিনব প্রজ্ঞাবিশিষ্ট বালকেরদিগের নীতিশিক্ষার নিমিত্তে এবং কামকলাকৌতুকাবিষ্ট পুরস্ত্রীগণের হর্ষের নিমিত্তে শ্রীশিবসিংহ রাজার আজ্ঞানুসারে বিদ্যাপতি নামে কবি এই গ্রন্থ রচনা করিতেছেন। এবং এই প্রার্থনা করিতেছেন যে রসজ্ঞানদ্বারা নির্ম্মলবুদ্ধি যে পণ্ডিত সকল তাহারা নীতি বোধানুবোধক যে এই সকল বাক্যের গুণ তন্নিমিত্তে কি আমার রচিত এই গ্রন্থ শ্রবণ করিবেন না অর্থাৎ অবশ্য শ্রবণ করিবেন। যে গ্রন্থের লক্ষণোক্ত পরীক্ষার দ্বারা পুরুষ সকলের পরিচয় হয় এবং যে গ্রন্থের কথা সকল লোকের মনোরমা হয় সেই পুরুষ পরীক্ষা নামক পুস্তক রচনা করা যাইতেছে।[3]

THE FRAMEWORK OF THE COLLECTION

The framework of the story is this. Once upon a time a certain king anxious to marry his beautiful daughter consulted a certain sage on the subject. The sage advised him to marry his daughter to a *man*. Asked what the characteristics of a real man are the sage begins enumerating and illustrating the various virtues of a real man and the object of manhood. The book is comparable in many respects to Mṛtyuñjay's *Batriś Siṃhāsan* or *Prabodh-chandrikā*, and although not

a third revised edition, Calcutta, possibly of 1866. An edition dated Calcutta 1818 is entered in the *Catalogue of the Library of the East India College*, 1843. There are two editions (the title-page is wanting) in the Library of the Sāhitya Pariṣat.

1 Although there are stories in this work which would have better been expurgated.

2 As a book of fable, this work seems to have been very popular. William Yates gives 16 stories from it the second volume of his *Introduction* and Haughton gives 4.

3 পুরুষ পরীক্ষা, pp. 3-4.

equally learned or affected, the style shows the same tendency to sanskritisation and borders almost on the pedantic. By taste and inclination, Haraprasād seems to belong to the same orthodox school as Mṛtyuñjay. It is hardly necessary to illustrate his style at a great length; the following short quotation picked out from the more easy portions will be found sufficient to enable the reader to form his own judgment:

ILLUSTRATIVE EXTRACT FROM THE STORY OF THE INDOLENT MEN

অথ অলসকথা।[1]

সকল কার্য্যের উদ্যোগের যে হেতু সেই উৎসাহ তাহাকে জীবের ধর্ম্মবিশেষ কহা যায় সেই উৎসাহহীন যে মনুষ্য সে অলস হয় তাহার উদাহরণ এই।

মিথিলা নগরীতে বীরেশ্বর নামে এক রাজমন্ত্রী থাকেন তিনি দানশীল এবং অত্যন্ত দয়ালু সকল দুর্গত ও অনাথ লোকেরদিগেরে প্রতিদিন তাহারদের ইচ্ছামত আহার দান করেন কিন্তু ঐ সকলের মধ্যে অলস লোকেরদিগেরে অন্ন এবং বস্ত্র দান করেন। যে হেতুক অলস লোক জঠরাগ্নিতে ব্যাকুল হইয়াও আলস্যপ্রযুক্ত কোন কর্ম্ম করিতে পারে না অতএব অলস লোক সকল দুর্গতের মধ্যে প্রধান গণিত হইয়াছে অথবা আলস্য পরম-সুখস্থান তদাশ্রিতরূপে খ্যাত যেহেতুক আলস্যমাত্রাবলম্বি পুরুষের অক্ষুব্ধ মন কোন বিষয়াকাঙ্ক্ষা করে না এবং সে স্বয়ং কোন অভিলষিত কর্ম্মে শ্রমযুক্ত হয় না কেবল জঠরাগ্নি তাহার নিদ্রাজন্য সুখ নষ্ট করে আমি এই বিবেচনা করি। পরে অনেক লোভী লোক অলসেরদের অভীষ্ট লাভ শুনিয়া সেখানে গিয়া অলসেরদিগের সহিত থাকিল যে হেতুক স্বজাতীয়ের সহবাস সকলের সুখকর হয় এবং স্বজাতীয়ের সুখ দেখিয়া কোন জীব সেখানে না যায়। পরে ধূর্ত্তেরা অলসেরদের সুখ দেখিয়া কৃত্রিম আলস্য প্রকাশ করিয়া সেখানে ভোজনদ্রব্য গ্রহণ করিতে লাগিল। পশ্চাৎ নিয়োগি পুরুষেরা অলসশালাতে

1 পুরুষ পরীক্ষা, pp. 55-58.

অনেক দ্রব্য ব্যয় জানিয়া এই পরামর্শ করিল যে স্বামী অলসেরদিগকে অক্ষম জানিয়া খাদ্যদ্রব্য দেন কিন্তু অলস ভিন্ন অন্য অন্য লোকও কপট করিয়া দ্রব্যগ্রহণ করিতেছে সে আমারদের বুদ্ধিভ্রমপ্রযুক্ত অতএব কেবল আমারদিগের দোষেতেই প্রভুর ধন নষ্ট হইতেছে ইহাতে আমরা প্রত্যবায়ী হইব। অতএব সকল অলসেরদের পরীক্ষা করি এই পরামর্শ করিয়া অলসেরা যে গৃহে শয়ন করিয়াছিল সেই গৃহে অগ্নি দিয়া নিকটে থাকিল তখন সেই গৃহে শয়িত ধূর্ত্ত সকল গৃহেতে অতিশয় প্রজ্জ্বলিতাগ্নি দেখিয়া দূরে পলায়ন করিল। অল্পালস পুরুষেরাও পলায়ন করিল। প্রকৃত অলস চারিজন সেখানে শয়ন করিয়া পরস্পর কথোপকথন করিতে লাগিল এবং তাহারদের মধ্যে একজন বস্ত্রেতে আপন মুখ ঢাকিয়া কহিতেছে ওহে ভাই কি নিমিত্তে এই কোলাহল হইতেছে। দ্বিতীয় ব্যক্তি কহিল আমি অনুভব করি যে এই গৃহে অগ্নি লাগিয়া থাকিবে। তখন তৃতীয় অলস কহিতেছে এখানে এমত ধার্ম্মিক লোক কেহ নাই যে আর্দ্র বস্ত্র কিম্বা আর্দ্র শয্যাকরণকে আমারদের শরীর আবৃত করে। চতুর্থ অলস ইহা শুনিয়া কহিল ওহে বাচাল সকল তোমরা কত কথা কহিতে পার কি মৌনী হইয়া থাকিতেই পার না। পশ্চাৎ নিয়োগি-পুরুষেরা এই চারি অলসলোকের পরস্পরালাপ শুনিয়া তাহারদিগের উপরে অগ্নিপতনের ভয়েতে সেই চারি অলস লোকেরদের কেশাকর্ষণ করিয়া শীঘ্র গৃহের বাহিরে আনিলেন। অনন্তর নিয়োগিপুরুষেরা এক শ্লোক পাঠ করিলেন তাহার অর্থ এই যেমত স্ত্রীলোকের স্বামী গতি এবং বালকেরদিগের জননী গতি সেইরূপ অলস লোকেরদিগের দয়ালু পুরুষই গতি তদ্ব্যতিরেকে অন্য গতি নাই। পরে সেই নিয়োগি পুরুষেরা অলসেরদিগকে পূর্ব্ব হইতে অধিক সামগ্রী দান করিতে লাগিলেন ইতি অলসকথা সমাপ্তা।

CHAPTER VII

EARLIEST BENGALI JOURNALISM

PERIODICALS AND NEWSPAPERS PUBLISHED BY ŚRĪRĀMPUR PRESS, 1818

It will be seen that almost all the publications of the College of Fort William were printed and issued at the Śrīrampur Press.[1] But a greater work than this was accomplished by it and its missionary founders when in 1818 John Clark Marshman, son of Josuah Marshman, proposed and carried out a scheme of publishing a monthly journal and a newspaper in Bengali. Such a project had long been present in the minds of the Śrīrāmpur missionaries, for the Press as a means of diffusing knowledge is always an important and useful auxiliary to an earnest missionary ; but stringent restrictions on the Press had made it difficult for them to carry out their purpose. When, therefore, in February 1818 Marshman proposed the publication of *Digdarśan*, Carey in his anxiety for the safety of the mission consented only on condition that it should be a monthly, and should avoid political discussion[2]. The first Bengali periodical, therefore,

1 When on March 21, 1800, an advertisement appeared in the official *Calcutta Gazette*, announcing that the missionaries had established a press at Śrīrāmpur, it at once roused Lord Wellesley who, although a liberal statesman, had fettered the press in British India. But on the assurance of Mr. Brown, the Governor-General informed the missionaries saying that he was personally favourable to the movement and that such an Oriental press would be invaluable to the College of Fort William.

2 Here is an extract from the minutes of the meeting of the Mission regarding the publication of *Digdarśan* :

"Feb. 13th, 1818. Mr. Marshman having proposed the publication of a periodical work in Bengali to be sold amongst the natives for the purpose of exciting a spirit of enquiry among them, it was resolved that there was no objection to the publication of such a journal, provided

confined itself purely to instructive literary, scientific, or historical essays of general interest[1].

THE DIGDARŚAN 1818

The *Digdarśan* or *Magazine for Indian Youth*, as its title-page says in the alternative (দিগ্‌দর্শন অর্থাৎ যুবলোকের কারণ সংগৃহীত নানা উপদেশ), was published in April 1818 and was thus the first paper of its kind in Bengali. It was essentially meant for the diffusion of useful knowledge on various subjects and none of the articles had any great pretension for original writing, artistic presentation or literary finish. The first number contained the following articles: আমিরিকার দর্শন বিষয়ে (Of the Discovery of America), হিন্দুস্থানের সীমার বিবরণ (Of the Limits of Hindoosthan), হিন্দুস্থানের বাণিজ্য (Of the Trade of Hindoosthan), বলুন দ্বারা সাদলর সাহেবের আকাশ গমন (Mr. Sadler's Journey in a Balloon from Dublin to Holyhead), বিসুবিয়স পর্ব্বত বিষয়ে (Of Mount Vesuvius). It will be seen that it was eminently fit to be a "Youth's Magazine", and the nature of the themes as well as the manner of expression was varied and novel enough to make it attractive. There were interesting scientific papers on the compass, the metals, the steamboat, botany of India etc., historical accounts of

all political intelligence, more especially regarding the East, be excluded from it and it does not appear in a form likely to alarm government. It must therefore be confined to articles of general information and notice of new discoveries, but a small place may be allotted to local events, with the view of rendering it attractive." (*History of Serampore Mission*, vol. ii, p. 162.)

1 From the Tenth *Memoir* relative to Serampore Translations (July 1832: Appendix) it appears that two editions were issued, viz., (1) bilingual, English and Bengali ; (2) in Bengali only. In the volumes we have been able to trace, Nos. i-xvi (from April 1818 to March 1819 and from January to April 1820) are bilingual : while Nos. xv to xxvi (from March 1820 to February 1821), it is published only in Bengali. We have another edition Nos. i-xii (April 1818 to March 1819) published only in Bengali. So it seems that the two editions were issued simultaneously from the very beginning of its publication.

ancient and modern nations, sketches, narratives of travel, notices of England and other countries, and a few essays on the commerce and products of India, all treated in a popular and easy way. The following selection will serve for a specimen:

বঙ্গভূমির মহাদুর্ভিক্ষ

বঙ্গভূমির প্রধান উৎপন্ন বস্তু ধান্য, তাহার অনেক অন্য দেশে প্রেরিত করা যায়, দৈবাৎ কখন কখন ফসল না জন্মিলে দুর্ভিক্ষ হয় এইরূপ দুর্ভিক্ষ বঙ্গভূমিতে ও হিন্দুস্থানের অন্য অন্য ভাগে কখন কখন হইয়াছিল সন ১৭৭০ সালে বাঙ্গালা দেশে এইরূপ অতি ঘোর দুর্ভিক্ষ হইয়াছিল, তৎকালে নবাব ও অন্যান্য ভাগ্যবান্ লোকেরা দরিদ্র লোকেরদের মধ্যে অনেক তণ্ডুল দান করিয়াছিলেন, কিন্তু শেষে তাঁহারদের ভাণ্ডার শূন্য হওয়াতে দান নিবৃত্ত হইল, ইহাতে অনেক দুঃখি লোক জীবনোপায় প্রত্যাশাতে তৎকালীন ইংগ্লণ্ডীয়েরদের প্রধান বসতি স্থান কলিকাতায় আইল, কিন্তু তখন কোম্পানীর ভাণ্ডারে দ্রব্যাভাব প্রযুক্ত তাহারদের কোন উপায় হইল না, ইহাতে সেই দুর্ভিক্ষারম্ভের দুই সপ্তাহ পরে সহস্র সহস্র লোক রাজপথে ও মাঠে স্থানে স্থানে পড়িয়া মরিল, এবং কুক্কুর ও শকুনিদ্বারা ঐ সকল মৃতশরীর ছিন্নভিন্ন হওয়াতে বায়ু অনিষ্টকারী হইল, তাহাতে সকলের ভয় জন্মিল এই দুর্ভিক্ষের পশ্চাৎ মহামারী আসিতেছে, কোম্পানীর প্রেরিত এক শত লোক নিযুক্ত ছিল, তাহারা ডুলি ও ঝোড়াদ্বারা ঐ সকল মৃত শরীর নদীতে ফেলিত, তৎপ্রযুক্ত নদীর জল এমত শবেতে পূরিল যে তাহার মৎস্য অখাদ্য হইল, এবং অনেক মৎস্যভোজী তৎক্ষণাৎ মরিল।

তৎসময়ে আগষ্ট মাসে অতিদূর আকাশে একটা ভয়ানক দুর্লক্ষণদর্শন হইল; তাহার বর্ণ কৃষ্ণমেঘের ন্যায়, সে কখন কখন সূর্য্যকে আচ্ছাদিত করিল, এবং কলিকাতার উপরি ভাগে অনেক দূরপর্য্যন্ত ব্যাপ্ত হইল; যে দিন অতিশয় গ্রীষ্ম সেই দিন ঐ মেঘ নীচে দৃষ্ট হইল, তাহাতে তিন দিন পর্য্যন্ত লোকেরদের অনেক ভাবনা জন্মিল, তৃতীয় দিবসে মেঘারম্ভ ও অতিশয় গ্রীষ্ম হইলে ঐ কৃষ্ণ মেঘ এত নীচে আইল যে সকলে সুন্দররূপ দর্শন করিতে পাইল, তখন বিশেষরূপে জানা গেল যে দংশকীটের মত বড় পতঙ্গ রক্তবর্ণ

শরীর ও মস্তক ও চক্ষু বড় ও মধুমক্ষিকার মত শ্রেণীবদ্ধ উড়িবার সময়ে অতিঋজু রেখার ন্যায়; কিন্তু তাহাহইতে লোকেরদের এমত ভয় হইল যে কেহ তাহার একটাকেও ধরিল না, সাঁইত্রিশ পলপর্য্যন্ত বৃষ্টি সমকালীন সকলে একস্থানে নিশ্চিন্ত রূপে রহিল, পরে চারিহস্ত উর্দ্ধে উঠিল এবং কিঞ্চিৎকাল পরে তত নামিল, পরে বায়ু কোণহইতে একটা বায়ু উঠিয়া দুই দিন পর্য্যন্ত থাকিল, ঐ বায়ুসত্ত্বে পূর্ব্বমত উঠিল ও নামিল কিন্তু অধিক শীঘ্ররূপে, তাহার পরদিবস অতিপ্রত্যুষে আকাশ শূন্য দেখা গেল, এই মেঘদর্শন হওনের পূর্ব্ব কতকদিন ভেক ও কীটাদি রাত্রিকালে বৃষ্টিপতন সময়ে অবিরত শব্দ করিয়াছিল, তাহারা এককালে এমন অদৃশ্য হইল যে নদী ভিন্ন আর কোনখানে তাহারা দেখা গেল না ও শুনা গেল না।

এই দুর্ভিক্ষ জলাভাবপ্রযুক্ত হইয়াছিল, বঙ্গভূমিতে দুই ফসল জন্মে, এক ফসল ক্ষুদ্র শস্য ও অন্য মহাফসল ধান্যাদি, কিন্তু ১৭৬৯ সালে জলাভাব-প্রযুক্ত মহাফসল ধান্যাদি জন্মিল না, এবং সন ১৭৭০ সালেও ক্ষুদ্র ফসল জন্মিল না ইহাতেই পূর্ব্বলিখিত দুর্দশা উপস্থিত হইয়াছিল।

এই দুর্ভিক্ষ অদ্যাপি বঙ্গভূমিস্থ লোকেরদের মন হইতে লুপ্ত হয় নাই, এবং অনেক বৃদ্ধলোকেরা আপনারদের যৌবনকালীন ক্রিয়ার সময় সেই দুর্ভিক্ষ বৎসর দ্বারা গণনা করেন।[1]

SAMĀCHĀR DARPAN 1818

This useful paper, however, lasted only for about three years (1818-1821).[2] Its success emboldened the missionaries to launch upon the more perilous venture of starting a newspaper in Bengali. A quarter or more of a century's intolerance on the part of Government had made the

1 *Digdarśan*, April 1820, pp. 167-173; the English translation here is omitted.

2 We have been able to trace the following numbers (in the Sāhitya Pariṣat Library); April 1818 to March 1919, Nos. i-xii; January 1820 to April 1820, Nos. xiii-xvi; May 1820 to February 1821, Nos. xvii to xxvi. It seems only 26 numbers were published. *The Catalogue of E. I. Company's Library*, 1845 (p. 267) enters *Digdarśan* only for April 1818 to February 1821.

missionaries diffident; but their eagerness to open a new avenue to the thoughts of the nation made them overcome all scruples. They took every precaution against imperilling the safety of their mission. Consequently, before the actual publication of the paper, they issued prospectus and advertisements in the English papers of Calcutta about the proposed journal so that objections, if any, from official and other quarters would be taken beforehand. Then on the critical night before the publication, the first proof of the first number was laid before the assembled brotherhood at their weekly meeting on Friday evening. Carey, whom long experience had taught to be more cautious mentioned his fears about the Mission, but he consented to its publication when Marshman promised to send a copy with an analysis of its contents in English to Government, and to stop the enterprise if it should be officially disapproved.[1] Lord

1 The narrative of the publication of *Digdarśan* as well as of this paper is thus given by J. C. Marshman: "It appeared (in 1818) that the time was ripe for a native newspaper, and I offered the missionaries to undertake the publication of it. The jealousy which the Government had always manifested of the periodical press appeared, however, to present serious obstacle. The English journals in Calcutta were under the strictest surveillance and many a column appeared resplendent with the stars which were substituted at the last moment for the editorial remarks and through which the censor had drawn his fatal pen. In this state of things it was difficult to suppose that a native paper would be tolerated for a moment. It was resolved therefore to feel the official pulse by starting a monthly magazine in the first instance, and the *Digdarshan* appeared in April 1818. It was composed of historical and other notices, likely from their novelty to excite the attention of the natives and to sharpen their curiosity. In the last page, in a smaller type, some few items of political intelligence were inserted. Two numbers were published, and copies were sent to the principal members of Government (including the censor) and the fact of the publication was widely circulated by advertisement in all the English papers of Calcutta. As no objection appeared to be taken to the publication of the magazine by the censor, though it contained news, it was resolved at once to launch the weekly paper, and call it by the name given to the earliest English news-letter, the *Mirror of the News* or *Samachar Darpan*.

Hastings was fighting the Pindaris, and nothing was said by his Council. On his return, the Governor-General wrote to the Editor with his own hand, expressing his entire approval of the paper and declaring that "the effect of such a paper must be extensively and importantly useful." He even induced his Council to allow it to circulate by post at one-fourth the then heavy rate[1] thus giving a fresh impetus to

But Dr. Carey, who had been labouring fifteen years in India during the period when the opposition to missionary efforts and enlightenment of the natives was in full vigour, was unfavourable to the publication of the Journal because he feared it would give umbrage in official circles and weaken the good understanding which had been gradually growing up between the missionaries and the government. He strenuously advised that the idea of it should be dropped, but he was overruled by his two colleagues, Dr. Marshman and Dr. Ward. When the prospectus was brought up for final examination at the weekly meeting of the missionaries the evening before the day of publication, he renewed his objection to the undertaking on the grounds he had stated. Dr. Marshman then offered to proceed to Calcutta the next morning and submit the first number of the new Gazette, together with a rough translation of the articles, to Mr. Edmonstone, then Vice-President, and to the Chief Secretary (John Adam), and he promised that it should be discontinued if they raised any objection to it. To his great delight he found both of them favourable to the undertaking. At the same time he transmitted a copy of the paper to Lord Hastings, then in the North Western Provinces, and was happy to receive a reply in his own hand highly commending the project of endeavouring to excite and gratify a spirit of enquiry in the native mind by means of a newspaper. And thus the journal was established. A copy of it was sent with a subscription-book to all the great baboos in Calcutta, and the first name entered on the list was that of Dwarkanath Tagore. On the return of Lord Hastings to the Presidency, he endeavoured to encourage the undertaking by allowing the journal to circulate through the country at one-fourth the usual charge of postage which at that time was extravagantly high" (Exract of a Letter from J. C. Marshman to Dr. George Smith published in the latter's *Twelve Indian Statesmen*, 1898, pp. 230-33. The same account is to be found in J. C. Marshman, *Life and Times of Carey, etc.*, vol. ii, p. 161 seq.). Also see *Cal. Rev.* 1907, vol. cxxiv, pp. 391-93.

1 For the postage-rates, see Seton-Karr, *op. cit.* vol. iv. (1868), p. 51,

the Indian newspaper press. It became popular at once, and as it avoided all religious controversy in the earlier issues, it was welcomed even by the most orthodox among the Hindus. The name of Dvārakānāth Ṭhākur headed the list of subscribers, and its long life of 34 years, in spite of later oppositions and vicissitudes, till 1852 sufficiently indicates its power, efficiency and popularity as the leading and for some time the only paper of the day. "To the *Darpan*," it is said, "the educated natives looked as the means of bringing the oppression of their own countrymen to the knowledge of the public and the authorities. Government too found it useful for contradicting rumours and promoting contentment, if not loyalty."[1]

The first number of the *Samāchār Darpaṇ* was published on Saturday, May 23, 1818 (১০ই জ্যৈষ্ঠ, সন ১২২৫)[2], and from the seventh number (July 4, 1818) till February 25, 1826 it bore on its front the following motto

দর্পণে মুখসৌন্দর্য্যমিব কার্য্যবিচক্ষণাঃ ।
বৃত্তান্তমিহ জানন্তু সমাচারস্য দর্পণে ॥

Marshman tells us that the paper was so baptised because the name (Mirror of News) was associated with the earliest English newsletter.[3] About the same time between May 14 to July 9, 1818 a Bengali weekly was published from Calcutta on Fridays by Gaṅgākiśor Bhaṭṭāchārya, who was a compositor at the Mission Press, Śrīrampur, but who left it to

etc. Government also encouraged the paper by subscribing to a hundred copies during 1820-1828.

1 Smith, *op. cit.* p. 204.

2 The earlier files of the paper had long become very scarce. We have been able to get access to the following files of the paper (*a*) from May 23, 1818 to July 14, 1821 (Sāhitya Pariṣat Library) (*b*) from 1831 to 1837 (Imperial, now National, Library, Calcutta) (*c*) From 1851 to 1852 (Bengal Asiatic Society's Library). An account of these files have been given by the present writer in an article in the *Sāhitya Pariṣat Patrikā*, vol. 24, pp. 149-170.

3 See extract from G. Smith, *Twelve English Statesmen*, quoted at p. 211 foot-note.

become a bookseller and publisher in Calcutta. It was called Bāṅgāl Gejeṭi. No file of this paper has yet been discovered. It existed probably for a year,[1] but *Samāchār Darpāṇ* continuted to flourish.

NATURE OF ITS ARTICLES

Although conducted chiefly by the missionaries, it was never wholly a missionary paper. J. C. Marshman was the editor, but on the editorial staff we find Jay Gopāl Tarkālaṃkāra (till 1824 when he left to become Professor of Kāvya at Calcutta Sanskrit College), and after him Tāriṇīcharaṇ Śiromani (till his death in June 1828).

Correspondence from various parts of the country—for it had a very large circulation over 360 stations—useful articles on scientific, political, historical and geographical topics,[2] adorned its eagerly read pages. It recorded all interesting contemporary incidents, political and administrative, and we have short articles on the fight with the Pindaris, on the conflict with Holkar, Sindhia and other Indian powers, on the last stage in the war between England and France (including many references to Napoleon Bonaparte), an account of the Mughal Emperor and of Raja Ranjit Sing and essays on other interesting topics. Besides these, there were descriptions, reviews and advertisements of new publications, educational news (like the proceedings of the School Book Society and the School Society and the establishment of a college at Śrīrāmpur), various social topics (like the description of Śrāddha ceremony of Gopīmohan Ṭhākur), market reports, reports on stocks and shares and on exports and imports, civil appointments, programmes of the Governor-General's tour, commercial and shipping intelligence, sensa-

1 See Brajendranath Banerji in বাংলা সাময়িক পত্র, pp. 11-15.

2 For a short list of these articles, see *Sāhitya Pariṣat Patrikā*, v. p. 257. For a note on Early Christian Periodicals, see Appendix IV at the end of this volume. See also Brajendranath Banerji, *Saṃbād-patre Sekāler Kathā*.

tional news (burning fatalities, theft, dacoity, murder, earthquake, storm, rathyātrā ceremony at Māheś), references to the filthy condition of Calcutta roads and other local complaints. Although chiefly a newspaper, it published from time to time various useful articles, short moral tales and humorous sketches.

ITS SCOPE AND OBJECT

The scope and object of the *Samāchār Darpaṇ* was thus set forth at the outset:

সমাচারদর্পণ।

কয় মাস হইল শ্রীরামপুরের [ছা]পাখানা হইতে এক ক্ষুদ্র পুস্তক[1] [প্রকা]শ হইয়াছিল ও সেই পুস্তক [মা]সং ছাপাইবার কল্পও ছিল তা[হা]র অভিপ্রায় এই যে এতদ্দেশীয় [লো]কেরদের নিকটে সকল প্রকার [বি]দ্যা প্রকাশ হয় কিন্তু সে পুস্তকে [সক]লের সম্মতি হইল না এই [কারণ] যদি সে পুস্তক মাসং ছাপা [যাইত] তবে কাহারো উপকার [হইত] না অতএব তাহার পরী[বর্ত্তে] এই সমাচারের পত্র ছা[পা] আরম্ভ করা গিয়াছে। [ইহার] নাম সমাচার দর্পণ।—

[এই স]মাচারের পত্র প্রতি সপ্তাহে ছাপা যাইবে তাহার মধ্যে [এই এই স]মাচার দেওয়া যাইবে।

[১ এতদ্দেশে]র জজ ও কলেক্তর [ ]র ও অন্য রাজকর্ম্মাধ্য[ক্ষেরদের] নিয়োগ।—

[২ শ্রীশ্রীযু]ত বড় সাহেব যেং [নূতন আই]ন ও হুকুম প্রভৃতি [প্রকাশ করিবে]ন।

[৩ ইংগ্লণ্ড] ও ইউরোপের অন্যং [প্রদেশ হইতে] যেং নূতন সমাচার [আইসে এবং] এই দেশের নানা [সমাচার]।

[৪ বাণিজ্যাদি]র নূতন বিবরণ।

৫ লোকেরদের জন্ম ও বিবাহ ও মরণ প্রভৃতি ক্রিয়া।

৬ ইউরোপদেশীয় লোক কর্ত্তৃক যেং নূতন সৃষ্টি হইয়াছে সেই সকল পুস্তক হইতে ছাপান যাইবে এবং যেং নূতন পুস্তক মাসেং ইংগ্লণ্ড হইতে

1 This was *Digdarśan*.

আইসে সেই সকল পুস্তকে যে২ নূতন শিল্প ও কল প্রভৃতির বিবরণ থাকে তাহাও ছাপান যাইবে।

৭ এবং ভারতবর্ষের প্রাচীন ইতিহাস ও বিদ্যা ও জ্ঞানবান লোক ও পুস্তক প্রভৃতির বিবরণ।

এই সমাচারের পত্র প্রতি শনিবারে প্রাতঃকালে সর্ব্বত্র দেওয়া যাইবে তাহার মূল্য প্রতি মাসে দেড় টাকা। প্রথম দুই সপ্তাহের সমাচারের পত্র বিনামূল্যে দেওয়া হইবে। ইহাতে যে লোকের বাসনা হইবেক তিনি আপন নাম শ্রীরামপুরের ছাপাখানাতে পাঠাইলে প্রতি সপ্তাহে তাহার নিকটে পাঠান যাইবে।

Space forbids us to make quotations from the longer articles, but we select here a few short specimens relating to a variety of topics.

"বোনাপার্ট।

মোং সেন্ত হেলিনা হইতে ৪ আগস্তের সমাচার আসিয়াছে তাহাতে জানা গেল যে সেখানকার অধ্যক্ষেরা বোনাপার্টকে আরও দৃঢ়রূপে রাখিবার চেষ্টা করিতেছে যে সেনাপতিরদের জিম্বাতে তিনি ছিলেন তাহারদিগের অকস্মাৎ বিলাতে পাঠাইয়া তাঁহাকে পুনর্বার যে নূতন সেনাপতিরদের জিম্বা করিয়াছিল তাহারদের পরীবর্ত্ত করিয়া পুনর্ব্বার নূতন সেনাপতিরদের জিম্বাতে তাহাকে রাখিয়াছে ইহার হেতু আমরা এত দূরে থাকিয়া জানিতে পারি না কেবল কর্ম্ম দেখিতে পাই।" (২রা জানুযায়ী, ১৮১৯। ২০শে পৌষ, ১২২৫)।

"কলিকাতার নরদামা।

কলিকাতা সহরের খবরদারিতে যে সকল সাহেবেরা নিযুক্ত আছেন তাহারা অনুমান করিয়াছেন যে কলিকাতায় অনেক অনেক গভীর নরদামা আছে তাহাতে অন্য কোন দ্রব্য পড়িলে তাহা পচিয়া অত্যন্ত দুর্গন্ধ নির্গত হয় তাহাতে লোকেরদের সতত রোগ জন্মে। অতএব সে সকল নরদামা বন্ধ করিয়া কিঞ্চিৎ গভীর নরদামা করা যাউক।" ইত্যাদি (২৭শে মে, ১৮২০। ১৫ই জ্যৈষ্ঠ, ১২২৭)।

"বেদান্ত মত।

৯ই মে রবিবার শ্রীযুত রাধাচরণ মজুমদারের পুত্র শ্রীকৃষ্ণমোহন ও শ্রীব্রজমোহন মজুমদারের ঘরে শ্রীযুত রামমোহন রায় প্রভৃতি সকল বৈদান্তিকেরা একত্র হইলেন এবং পরস্পর আপনারদের মতের বিবেচনা করিলেন। আমরা শুনিয়াছি যে সেই সভাতে জাতির প্রতিবিধি কিম্বা নিষেধ বিষয়ে বিচার হইল এবং খাদ্যের প্রতি যে নিষেধ আছে তাহারও বিষয়ে বিচার হইল। এবং যুবতী স্ত্রীর মরণানন্তর সহমরণ না করিয়া কেবল ব্রহ্মচর্য্যে কালক্ষেপ কর্ত্তব্য এই বিষয়েও অনেক বিবেচনা হইল এবং বৈদিকধর্ম্মের বিষয়ে বিচার হইল সেই সময়ে বেদের উপনিষদ হইতে আপনারদের মতানুযায়ী বাক্য পড়া গেল ও তাহার অর্থ করা গেল ও তাঁহারা বেদান্তের মতানুসারে গীত গাইলেন।" (২২শে মে, ১৮১৯। ১০ই জ্যৈষ্ঠ, ১২২৬)।

"স্কুলবুক সোসাইটী।

১১ আক্টোবর বুধবারে কলিকাতার স্কুলবুক সোসাইটীর তৃতীয় বৎসরীয় মিসিল হইয়াছে এবং ঐ সোসাইটী অতি সুন্দররূপ চলিতেছে। ঐ সোসাইটীর অন্তঃপাতি লোকেরা নূতন২ প্রকার পুস্তক প্রস্তুত করেন ও বাঙ্গলা পাঠশালাতে বিতরণ করেন। তাহাতে লক্ষ্ণৌয়ের নবাব সাহেব কোম্পানির উকীল সাহেব দ্বারা স্কুলবুক সোসাইটীর ব্যয়ের কারণ এক হাজার টাকা কলিকাতা পাঠাইয়া দিয়াছেন। শ্রীযুত মন্তেগু সাহেব ও শ্রীযুত তারিণীচরণ মিত্রজার কথাক্রমে মৃত্যুঞ্জয় বিদ্যালঙ্কারের পুত্র শ্রীযুত রামজয় তর্কালঙ্কার ঐ সোসাইটীর কোমিটীতে আপন পিতার ভার পাইয়াছেন এবং শ্রীযুত বাবু উমানন্দ ঠাকুরও ঐ সোসাইটীর অন্তঃপাতী হইয়াছেন এবং মৌলবী করীম হোসেন শ্রীযুক্ত লেপ্টেনন্ত ব্রাইস সাহেব ও কাজী আবদুল হমিদের কথাক্রমে পুনর্ব্বার ঐ সোসাইটীর অন্তঃপাতী হইয়াছেন।" (২১শে অক্টোবর, ১৮২০। ৬ই কার্ত্তিক, ১২২৭)।

"নূতন পুস্তক।

শ্রীযুত ফিলিক্স কেরি সাহেব ইংগুীয় (*sic*) পুস্তক হইতে সংগ্রহ করিয়া বিদ্যাহারাবলী নামে এক নূতন পুস্তক বাঙ্গালি ভাষায় করিয়া মোং শ্রীরামপুরে ছাপা করিতেছেন ইহাতে নানা প্রকার বিদ্যার কথা আছে ঐ গ্রন্থের মধ্যে

আটচল্লিশ কিম্বা ছাপ্পান্ন ফর্দ একাকার কাগজেতে এবং অক্ষরেতে মাস২ ছাপা হইবেক। ঐ আটচল্লিশ কিম্বা ছাপ্পান্ন ফর্দেতে এক নম্বর দেওয়া যাইবেক ঐ এক২ নম্বরের মূল্য দুই২ টাকা।" (১২ই জুন, ১৮১৯। ৩১শে জ্যৈষ্ঠ, ১২২৬)।

"উপস্থিত বক্তা।

এক সময়ে ফ্রান্স দেশের বাদশাহ রোমের প্রধান ধর্ম্মাধ্যক্ষের নিকট এক যুবা পুরুষকে আপন উকীল করিয়া পাঠাইলেন। উকীল ধর্ম্মাধ্যক্ষের নিকটে গিয়া সাক্ষাৎ করিল ও যথোপযুক্ত স্থানে বসিল। ঐ প্রতাপী ধর্ম্মাধ্যক্ষ ক্রোধপূর্ব্বক যুবা উকীলকে কহিলেন যে তোমার বাদশাহ কি আমার সহিত উপহাস করেন দেখ যাহার দাড়ী উঠে নাই এমত বালককে আমার নিকটে পাঠাইয়াছেন। ইহা শুনিয়া উকীল উত্তর করিল যে যদি আমার বাদশাহ জানিতেন যে জ্ঞান ও বিদ্যা সকলি দাড়ীর মধ্যে আছে তবে এক ছাগলকে পাঠাইলেই উপযুক্ত হইত। ইহাতে ধর্ম্মাধ্যক্ষ আন্তরিক তুষ্ট হইলেন।" (২১শে এপ্রিল, ১৮২১)।

ITS SUBSEQUENT HISTORY

With regard to the subsequent history of the paper, we do not get any complete information. Long states that its existence was limited to 21 years from the date of publication[1]: in other words, it ceased to exist in 1839. From the files of the paper in the Calcutta Imperial (now National) Library (from 1831 to 1837) and in the Bengal Asiatic Society Library (from May 3, 1851 to April 24, 1852), we get clear evidence of its existence till April 24, 1852 and of the fact that there was no breach in its publication from 1831 to 1837. We also gather from an article in the *Calcutta Christian Observer* (1840)[2] that it did not cease even till 1840. On December 25, 1841 the *Samāchār Darpaṇ* disappeared for some time but it was reborn again in 1851 ; because on the file of May 3, 1851 we find the numbering of the new series

1 Long, *Return of Names and Writings, etc.*, 1855, p. 145.

2 February 1840, pp. 65-66.

"vol. I no. I." (১ বালম। ১ সংখ্যা). On the first page also of this new series we get this editorial note:

"সমাচারদর্পণের নমস্কার।

পাঠক মহাশয়েরদের সমীপে প্রাচীন দর্পণের নামে ও আকার প্রকারে উপস্থিত হওয়াতে ভরসা করি অনেক পাঠক মহাশয় আমারদিগকে বহুকালীন বৃদ্ধ বন্ধু স্বরূপ দর্শন করিয়া গ্রহণ করিবেন। যখন ১৮৪১ সালের ২৫ ডিসেম্বর তারিখে দর্পণের অদর্শন হইল তখন পুনরুদয় হওনের প্রত্যাশা ছিল না পরন্তু দেখুন পুনরুত্থিত হইলাম। এই দর্পণের নাম ও বেশ বৃদ্ধ প্রবীণের, সাহস ও শক্তি নবীনের।" ইত্যাদি (১ বালম। ১ সংখ্যা। ৩রা মে, শনিবার, ১৮৫১। ২১শে বৈশাখ, ১২৫৮ সাল)।

ITS BILINGUAL STAGE

From July 11,1829 to 1837, the paper was bilingual, being written both in Bengali and English in parallel columns. After its resurrection in 1851 it continued bilingual.

In 1831 the paper was published every on Saturday as the headnote "Serampore. Published every Saturday morning" indicates. From 1818 to 1831, therefore, it was a weekly paper published every Saturday morning. From Jan. 11 1832, it became bi-weekly, as the headnote on the files of that year show; "Published every Wednesday and Saturday morning." But from November 8, 1834 it became Saturday weekly again and probably continued so till its disappearance on December 25, 1841.

In 1818, its editor was J. C. Marshman, and he probably continued in that office till 1840. The second series 1842-43 was edited by Bhagabatī Charaṇ Chaṭṭopādhyāy, and the expenses more borne by Dīnanāth Datta. The third series 1851-52 was started on May 3,1851 and continued till April 24, 1852; it was edited by Meredith Townsend. In the issue of November 15, 1834 we find this remark:.

"চন্দ্রিকাসম্পাদক মহাশয় দর্পণের বিষয়ে যে অনুগ্রহ প্রকাশক উক্তি লিখিয়াছেন তাহাতে আমরা বিশেষ বাধ্য হইলাম তাঁহার ঐ উক্তি

দর্পণৈকপার্শ্বে সুপ্রকাশিত হইল। কিন্তু এক বিষয়ে তাঁহার কিঞ্চিৎ ভ্রম আছে তিনি লিখিয়াছেন দর্পণ পত্র প্রথমতঃ ৺ডাক্তার কেরী সাহেব কর্ত্তৃক প্রকাশিত হয় ইহা প্রকৃত নহে দর্পণের এই ক্ষণকার সম্পাদক যে ব্যক্তি কেবল সেই ব্যক্তির ঝুঁকিতেই ষোল বৎসরেরও অধিক হইল অর্থাৎ দর্পণের আরম্ভাবধি এই পর্য্যন্ত প্রকাশ হইয়া আসিতেছে।"

From May 3, 1851 Meredith Townsend, editor of the *Friend of India*[1] conducted this paper. In the file of that year (May 3, towards the end of no. 1), we find this entry: শ্রীরামপুরের যন্ত্রালয়ে শ্রীটৌন্সেণ্ড সাহেব কর্ত্তৃক প্রকাশিত। Moreover, a correspondent of the paper writes on May 10, 1851:

"সেলাম পুরঃসর নিবেদনমিদং গবর্ণমেণ্ট গেজেট পাঠ করিয়া আমারদিগের বহুকালের শোক নিবারণ হইল যেহেতুক সত্যপ্রদীপের পরিবর্ত্তে পুনরায় সমাচারদর্পণ প্রকাশ হইতে লাগিল" ইত্যাদি।

This *Satya-pradīpa* was a weekly paper edited by Townsend. It was published on May 4, 1850, but it did not continue for more than a year, having ceased in April 26, 1851. Probably after its cessation, Townsend took up the editorship of *Samāchār Darpaṇ* A Persian edition of the *Samāchār Darpaṇ* was published from Serampore on May 6, 1826.

1 Meredith Townsend was a nephew of John Clark Marshman. He founded the *Friend of India* on January 1, 1835 and edited the paper for 17 years.

CHAPTER VIII

LATER EUROPEAN WRITERS

In the publication of the periodicals described in the last chapter, it will be seen that the most active part was taken by the two Marshmans, father and son. The labours of Joshua Marshman, to whom indeed was due the consolidation of the Mission, were too varied and wide-spread to be confined chiefly to the study and encouragement of Bengali.[1]

JOHN CLARK MARSHMAN 1794-1877

His son, John Clark Marshman, who was born in August 18, 1794, inherited in a large measure all his literary predilections, his great capacity for work, as well as his unflagging philanthropic zeal. He came to Serampore with his father when he was barely five years old. He was educated there, and from 1812 when he was barely seventeen years old, he devoted himself to the work of the Mission. From 1819 he began to direct his father's religious undertakings and entered with zeal into all the labours of the mission. His reputation as a European scholar of Bengali secured for him the post of Translator in Bengali to Government, and his numerous Bengali works fully maintain this reputation. He returned to England in 1852 and died at Redcliffe Square, North Kensington, London, on July 8, 1877.[2] J. C. Marshman

1 Chronologically speaking, the European writers of Bengali of whom enumeration follows below do not properly belong to this period ; for this period ends at about 1825 and a distinctly new movement becomes dominant thereafter. The literary labours of the missionaries lose their importance and occupy only a subsidiary place in that movement after 1825. They are mentioned here in order to keep up continuity of treatment.

2 For more details, see *Annual Register*, 1877, p. 154 ; *Journ. R. A. Soc.*, 1878, vol. x, Ann. Rep. pp. xx-xii ; *Dictionary of National*

was indeed a versatile and voluminous writer, both in English and Bengali, and it is not possible to give here a complete list of his works. The following are the more important works in Bengali due to him or ascribed to him:

(1) ভারতবর্ষের ইতিহাস। অর্থাৎ কোম্পানি বাহাদুরের সংস্থাপনাবধি মাকু ইশ হেষ্টিংসের রাজ্যশাসনের শেষ বৎসর পর্য্যন্ত ইংলণ্ডীয়েরদের কৃত তাবদ্বিবরণ। ২ বালম। শ্রীরামপুর। ১৮৩১। or History of India from the Settlement of the E. I. Company down to the Conquest of the Pindaris by the Marquis of Hastings in 1819. 2 vols, Serampore 1831, pp. 374+391.

(2) বাঙ্গালার ইতিহাস or History of Bengal from the Accession of Suraj-ad-Daulah to the Administration of Lord William Bentinck translated from the English of J. C. Marshman[1]. Calcutta. 1848.

(3) পুরাবৃত্তের সংক্ষেপ বিবরণ। অর্থাৎ পৃথিবীর সৃষ্টি অবধি খৃষ্টীয়ান শকের আরম্ভ পর্য্যন্ত। শ্রীরামপুর। ১৮৩৩। or Brief Survey of History in Bengalee from the Creation to the Christian era. Calcutta 1883, pp. 6+513. (Also called ইতিবৃত্তসার).

(4) দেওয়ানি আইনের সংগ্রহ। অর্থাৎ যে সকল আইন ও আইনের অর্থ সর্কুলর অর্ডর প্রভৃতি ইংরাজী ১৭৯৩ সাল লাং ১৮৩৪ সাল হইয়াছে তাহা। শ্রীযুত জান মার্শমান সাহেব বর্ত্তৃক সংগৃহীত। দুই বালম। শ্রীরামপুর। pp. 400+385. or a Translation of J. C. Marshman's Guide to the Civil Law in the Presidency of Fort William containing all the unrepealed regulations, acts and circular orders of Government and summary reports

Biography (a good list of his English works will be found here). Also Allibone, *Dictionary of British and American Authors*. All the details are summarised in Sajanikanta Das in his article on John Clark Marshman in *Baṅgīya Sāhitya Pariṣat Patrikā*, vol. 65, no. 2, pp. 89-114.

1 Also translated by Wenger (2nd Edition, 1859) named বঙ্গদেশের পুরাবৃত্ত।

of the Sudder Courts from 1793 to 1843, in 2 vols. 1843. (2nd Ed. Serampore 1849)[1].

(5)? জ্যোতিষ ও গোলাধ্যায় অর্থাৎ জ্যোতিষ পদার্থের ও পৃথিবীর আকৃতি ও নানা দেশ ও নদী ও পর্ব্বত ও রাজ্যাধিকার ও ঈশ্বরারাধনা ও বাণিজ্য ও লোকসংখ্যা ইত্যাদির বিবরণ লোকেরদের বিশেষ জ্ঞাপনার্থে। বাঙ্গালি ভাষাতে তর্জ্জমা হইল। শ্রীরামপুরে দ্বিতীয়বার ছাপা হইল। সন ১৮১৯। (পৃঃ ১৮১) or Treatises of Astronomy and Geography translated into Bengalee.[2] 2nd Edition. Serampore 1819.

(6) দারোগার কর্ম্মপ্রদর্শক গ্রন্থ or a Translation of J. C. Marshman's Darogah's Manual comprising the duties of the landholders in connexion with the police. Serampore 1851, pp. 18+395.

(7) সদ্‌গুণ ও বীর্য্যের ইতিহাস। সকল লোকের হিতার্থে বাঙ্গালা ভাষায় তর্জ্জমা করা গেল। তাহার একদিগে ইঙ্গরেজী একদিগে বাঙ্গালা। শ্রীরামপুরে ছাপা হইল। ১৮২৯। (দুইভাগ, মোট ৯৫ ইতিহাস, পৃঃ ২৩৯) or Anecdotes of Virtue and Valour translated into Bengalee and printed with the English and Bengalee Versions on opposite pages in two parts. Serampore Press 1829.

(8) ব্যবস্থা বিধান (a Dictionary of Law terms) Serampore 1851.

1 A specimen of its legal language is given here. It will be seen that the language, although persianised is yet more easy and natural than the stiff and technical legal diction of the beginning of the century:

জমিদার ও তালুকদার ও ভূম্যধিকারী ও ইজারাদার প্রভৃতির সাধ্য আছে যে তাহারদিগের কাহারু মালগুজারীর বাকী দাওয়া কোন মফঃস্বল তালুকদার রাইয়ত প্রভৃতির উপর থাকিলে যদি সেই বাকী টাকা মাল ক্রোক করণের দ্বারা আদায় করিতে না পারেন তবে সেই বাকীদার অথবা তাহার মালজামিনের স্থানে সেই বাকী তলব করিতে অথবা সেই বাকীদার মালজামিন পলাইতে উদ্যত হইলে তাহাকে তলব না করিয়া ঐ পলায়নোন্মুখ বাকীদার কি মালজামিনকে নীচের লিখিতমতে কয়েদ করিতে পারেন। ইত্যাদি। (vol. ii, p. 4).

2 Published anonymously.

(8) ক্ষেত্রবাগান বিবরণ অর্থাৎ আগ্রিকলচরাল ও হর্টিকলচরাল সোসাইটির নিষ্পান্ন কার্য্যের ববরণ পুস্তক or Agri-Horticultural transactions by J. Marsman in two volumes. 1831, 1836.

(9) Abridgment of Carey's Dictionary[1].

Besides these, his most important work is *the Life and Times of Carey, Marshman and Ward, embracing the History of the Serampore Mission* in 2 vols, Longmans: London 1859 (pp. 511+527).

It will be noticed from the above enumeration, that some of these works hardly put forward any claim to literary merit whatsoever, as they are composed on strictly non-literary subject, while the historical treatises, more or less closely allied to literature pure or proper, are again mere translations or replicas of English original[2]. Marshman's style, like that of most of the European writers of Bengali enumerated below, possesses hardly any characteristic distinction of its own. Indeed there is such a pervading uniformity and general sameness of character in the writings of these European scholars that it would be scarcely necessary to take and comment upon the style and peculiarities of each. We shall, on the other hand, content ourselves, wherever necessary, by giving specimens of their general style in individual cases. The following extract from ভারতবর্ষের ইতিহাস, the theme of which dealing as it does with historical narrative affords some scope indeed for literary expression, will serve as a specimen of Marshman's style. But it will be noticed that it presents hardly any distinctive feature at all, and is greatly inferior to

1 See page 137-38 and footnote thereon. Other works ascribed to him are: (1) interlinear translation (Bengali and English) of Æsop's Fables. (2) Murray's Grammar in Bengali (মারিচ গ্রামার) (Long. *Return of Names and Writings*, etc., p. 134).

2 These are the volumes which were intended to form a series of elementary works on History and Science for the use of Indian youths (see Preface to Mack's কিমিয়া বিদ্যার সার, Serampore 1834) noticed below.

the manner of many of his European colleagues and fellow-writers in the same field:

পলাসির যুদ্ধ।

পলাসিতে নবাব সাহেবের পূর্ব্বকালাবধি কতক সৈন্য ছাউনি করিয়া রহিয়াছিল এবং ইংলণ্ডীয়েরা যে রাত্রিতে সে স্থানে পহুছিলেন ঐ দিবস নবাব সাহেব স্বয়ং সে স্থানে উপস্থিত হইলেন। তাঁহার সঙ্গে পঞ্চাশ সহস্র পদাতিক এবং অষ্টাদশ সহস্র অশ্বারূঢ় এবং পঞ্চাশটা তোপ ছিল। ইংলণ্ডীয়েরদের কেবল নয়শত গোরা তাহার মধ্যেও একশত গোলন্দাজ ও পঞ্চাশ জন মল্ল তদ্ভিন্ন একশত জন টোপস ও দুইহাজার একশত সিপাহী সর্ব্বসুদ্ধা তিন সহস্র একশত সৈন্য ছিল। তাবৎ দিবস ব্যাপিয়া সংগ্রাম হইল এবং যুদ্ধ প্রায় গোলাক্ষেপেতে নিষ্পন্ন হইল তাহাতে সুবাদার অত্যন্ত ভীত হইয়া অনিষ্টচেষ্টকেরদের পরামর্শেতে বেলাবসানে আপন সৈন্যেরদিগকে পশ্চাৎ হটিতে আজ্ঞা দিলেন ইহা দেখিয়া মীরজাফর আপন সৈন্য পৃথক করিলেন তাহাতে ক্লাইব সাহেবের মনেতে নিশ্চয় হইল যে মীরজাফর আমারদের পক্ষে হইবেক অতএব তিনি ইংলণ্ডীয় সৈন্যেরদিগকে অগ্রসর হইয়া রণভূমিস্থ নবাব সাহেবের অবশিষ্ট সৈন্যের উপর আক্রমণ করিতে আজ্ঞা দিলেন। এই দুই দুর্ঘটনাতে অর্থাৎ মীরজাফরের বিশ্বাসঘাতকতাতে ও ইংলণ্ডীয় সৈন্যের অগ্রসরণ দেখিয়া নবাব সাহেবের মন যে কিঞ্চিৎ দোলায়মান ছিল সে স্থির হইল এবং তিনি দুই সহস্র লোক লইয়া অতি বেগগামি উষ্ট্রারোহণ পূর্ব্বক পলায়ন করিলেন। নবাব সাহেবের পলায়ন দেখিয়া সকলেই যুদ্ধেতে অমনোযোগী হইল অতএব ইংলণ্ডীয় সৈন্য বৈকালে পাঁচঘণ্টা সময় বিপক্ষেরদের ছাউনিতে প্রবেশ করিল। এইরূপে কুড়ি জন গোরা হত ও আঘাতী হওয়াতে এবং ষোলজন সিপাহী হত ও ছত্রিশ জন আঘাতী হওয়াতে অতি বৃহদ্রাজ্যের ও ছয়কোটি লোকের পরিবর্ত্তন হইল। (Vol. I p. 131)[1].

1 See also, for an account of the same battle, the author's বঙ্গদেশের পুরাবৃত্ত (Ed. Wenger), pp. 163-166. It is interesting to compare these accounts with that given by Rājīblochan in his *Mahārāj Kṛṣṇa Chandra Rāyasya Charitram.*

WILLIAM WARD 1769-1823

The next name, that we take up is Ward's, but we can dismiss it with a few words, as it is not one of any primary importance to Bengali literature. Ward's services as a printer to the Śrīrāmpur Press were indeed great, but his direct connexion with Bengali literature was of the slightest kind. Possibly he could not even speak Bengali so fluently as his colleagues did[1], and the only work which he wrote in Bengali —not remarkable either for its form or for its matter—was পীতাম্বর সিংহের চরিত্র or Memoir of Pitambar Sing, a native Christian[2].

FELIX CAREY 1786-1822

William Carey's son, Felix Carey, however, contributed some important works to the literature of the period. Felix Carey was born in October 20, 1786 and died at Śrīrāmpur in November 10, 1822 at the early age of 36. Within this brief space of life, he applied himself successfully to the philanthropic and missionary work with which his father had been identified and collaborated with him in his literary undertakings. He was a medical missionary of great skill, a first-rate printer trained by Ward, and a scholar in Sanskrit and Pali, Bengali and Burmese, not unworthy his father[3]. He was not only a coadjutor of Rām-kamal Sen[4] but himself planned (1818) the scheme[5] of bringing out an edition of Bengali encyclopaedia. His untimely death prevented him from carrying out his design to a successful issue, but

1 E. Carey, *Memoir of Carey*, p. 424.

2 4th Ed. Calcutta 1843.

3 For more details about his life and writings, see Marshman, *Life and Times of Carey*, etc. ; *Bengal Obituary*, pp. 249-250 ; Smith, *Life of William Carey* (many references) ; *Dictionary of National Biography.*

4 *Bengal Obituary*, p. 250.

5 See বিদ্যাহারাবলী পাঠকেরদের প্রতি মেং ফিলিক্স কেরী সাহেবের পত্র। appended to F. Carey's বিদ্যাহারাবলী তৎপ্রথমগ্রন্থ ব্যবচ্ছেদবিদ্যা।

he had the satisfaction of seeing the first volume of the series, a treatise on Anatomy, published before he died. His chief works in Bengali are: (1) ব্রিটিন্ দেশীয় বিবরণ সঞ্চয় অর্থাৎ জুলিয়স্ কাইসরের ব্রিটিন্ দেশাতিক্রমসময়াবধি আইমেন্স নামে প্রসিদ্ধ সন্ধিসময় পর্য্যন্ত মহাব্রিটিনের বিবরণ সঞ্চয়, তন্মধ্যে জুলিয়স্ কাইসরের কালাবধি দ্বিতীয় জর্জ্জ নামে রাজার মৃত্যুপর্য্যন্ত, গোল্‌ড্‌স্মিৎ উপাধ্যায় বিবরণীকৃত ; এবং ঐ জর্জ্জের মরণাবধি ১৮০২ সালের আইমেন্স নামক সন্ধিসময় পর্য্যন্ত, অন্য এক প্রথিত প্রজ্ঞোপাধ্যায় কর্ত্তৃক বিবরণীকৃত। ফিলিক্স কেরি কর্ত্তৃক বাঙ্গালা ভাষায় কৃত। শ্রীরামপুরে ছাপা হইল, ইতি শকাব্দ ১৮১৯ or an Abridgment of the History of England, from the invasion of Julius Caesar to the death of George the Second by Dr. Goldsmith and continued by an eminent writer to the Peace of Amiens in the year 1802, translated into Bengalee by Felix Carey. Serampore 1820. Republished by the School Book Society. (2) যাত্রিদের অগ্রেসরণ বিবরণ অর্থাৎ ইহলোক হইতে পরলোক গমনবিবরণ।...যোহন্ বন্যান্ কর্ত্তৃক তৎস্বপ্নলভ্য এই গ্রন্থবিবরণ রচিত হইয়াছে। আমি দৃষ্টান্তব্যবহার করিয়াছি। ফিলিক্স কেরী কর্ত্তৃক বাঙ্গালা ভাষায় অর্থসংগৃহীত। শ্রীরামপুরে ছাপা হইল। ইংলণ্ডীয় সন ১৮২১। বাঙ্গালা সন ১২২৮ শাল। The Pilgrim's Progress from this World to That which is to come by John Bunyan. Part I, translated into Bengalee by F. Carey. Serampore: Printed at the Mission Press 1821. Edition by J. D. Pearson, 1834; by Wenger, 1852. (3) বিদ্যাহারাবলী অর্থাৎ বাঙ্গালা ভাষায় কৃত ইউরোপীয় সর্ব্বগ্রাহ্য তাবৎ আয়ুর্ব্বেদ শিল্পবিদ্যাদি মূলগ্রন্থাবলী। তৎপ্রথমগ্রন্থ। ব্যবচ্ছেদবিদ্যা। ফিলিক্স কেরী কর্ত্তৃক পঞ্চমবার-ছাপাকৃত এন্‌সেক্লোপেদিয়া ব্রিটানিকা নামক গ্রন্থাবলী হইতে বাঙ্গালা ভাষায় কৃত। গরিষ্ঠ উলিআম্ কেরী কর্ত্তৃক তর্জমা বিবেচিত এবং শ্রীকান্ত বিদ্যালঙ্কার কর্ত্তৃক ভাষা বিবেচিত ও শ্রীকবিচন্দ্র তর্কশিরোমণি কর্ত্তৃক সাহায্যীকৃত। শ্রীরামপুর মিশিয়ন ছাপাখানাতে ছাপাকৃত। সন ১৮২০। Vidyaharabulee or Bengalee Encyclopaedia. Vol. I. Anatomy, translated into Bengalee from the 5th edition of Encyclopaedia Britannica by F. Carey. Assisted

by Sreekanta Vidyalunkar and Shree Kobichundra Turkasiromoni, Pundits. The whole revised by the Rev. W. Carey D. D. Serampore: Printed at the Mission Press 1820. (Nov. 1)[1].

From a literary point of view, however, none of these work is delectable to the general reader and we may pass over them without any special comment. But the last-named publication has an interest of its own as the first vernacular work on a scientific subject written on western lines. It will be hardly within our scope to give a detailed analysis of the book, but an emumeration of the chief heads of subjects dealt with will sufficiently explain its scope and object. It is divided into three parts (কাণ্ড), each part containing several chapters (খণ্ড), and each chapter divided into sections (অধ্যায়), which are again subdivided into paragraphs or articles (পর্ব্ব). The first part in six chapters deals with Osteology (অস্থিবিদ্যা), second part in twelve chapters with Comparative Anatomy (তুল্যাতুল্য ব্যবচ্ছেদবিদ্যা), while the third part traces the history and progress of the science (ব্যবচ্ছেদবিদ্যোৎপত্তিকারণ) and gives a list of the principal Indian works (then known) on "the subject of Anatomy, Medicine and Chemistry" with the names of their authors and a brief account of their contents. The whole is rounded off with a glossary of technical and difficult terms (ব্যবচ্ছেদবিদ্যাসংজ্ঞার্থজ্ঞাপক এক অভিধান) which, in certain respects, is the most interesting part of the entire treatise. This enormous volume of about 700 pages, however, is hardly

1 On Felix Carey and his chequered career see Sajanikanta Das in his pamphlet on Felix Carey in সাহিত্যসাধক চরিত মালা no. 88, pp. 17-57. Other works attributed to F. Carey are: (i) Translation of Mill's *History of India* (Smith, *Life of William Carey*, p. 204: *Bengal Obituary*, p. 250) published by School Book Society. (ii) A Work on Land in Bengali (*Bengal Obituary*, p. 205). Dinesh Chandra Sen (*History of Bengali Lit.*, p. 872) erroneously gives the title of F. Carey's Anatomy as "Hāḍāvali Vidyā" (হাড়াবলী বিদ্যা) obviously mistaking the name বিদ্যাহারাবলী or cyclopaedia of knowledge. This book will also be found in the list of School Book Society's publication before 1821.

commendable for its stiff and laboured style, bristling as it does with unintelligible technical terms and phrases, but it certainly bears testimony to the compiler's learning and unwearied industry. The following will serve as a specimen of its harsh and difficult style:

পৃষ্ঠের কণ্টাকৃতি প্রবর্দ্ধনযুক্ত ঐ মাংসপেশী উৰ্দ্ধস্থ কট্যাবর্ত্তকের এবং অধঃস্থ পৃষ্ঠাবর্ত্তকের কণ্টাকৃতি প্রবর্দ্ধনেতে প্রবিষ্ট হয়। পৃষ্ঠের কণ্টক প্রবর্দ্ধন-প্রযুক্ত ঐ মাংসপেশী কশেরুকাবর্ত্তকাকে উত্তোলন করে (p. 161)। অপর ঐ গলাগ্রকাকুদের লুণ্ঠমান পর্দ্দার উভয়পার্শ্বে স্থিত অতি বৃহদ্ গুটিকা নামে মাংসগ্রন্থিদ্বয়েতে সর্ব্বদা আদ্র´ভাবে থাকে ঐ মাংসগ্রন্থিদ্বয় বাদামবীজাকৃতি প্রযুক্ত কোনো২ ব্যবচ্ছেদকেরা তাহারদিগের বাদামগুটিকা সংজ্ঞা করিয়াছেন (p. 232)।

The Glossary, is not always accurate and expressive but it is a praiseworthy attempt, interesting to the student of the language. It covers about 40 pages of close print and is exhaustive as far as the efforts of the compiler could reach, who himself was fully cognisant of the difficulties of his task.[1]

1 For the difficulties of his subject and his style as well as for imperfection of his glossary, the compiler does not forget to make an ample apology:

অপর সকল বিদ্যাগ্রন্থে সংজ্ঞাশব্দ না হইলে নির্ব্বাহ হয় না অতএব যে স্থানে উপযুক্তসংজ্ঞা পাওয়া গিয়াছে তাহাই গৃহীতা হইয়াছে কিন্তু যে যে স্থানে উপযুক্ত সংজ্ঞা পাওয়া যায় নাই সেই সেই স্থানে সাধ্যানুসারে সংস্কৃত সংজ্ঞা গঠান গিয়াছে এবং তদ্বিষয়ে এতদ্দেশীয় তাবদ্‌গ্রন্থ আলোচিত হইয়াছে। অপর কহি উপযুক্ত সংজ্ঞাগঠনই অতিদুঃসাধ্য কার্য্য অতএব এই বিদ্যা-হারাবলী গ্রন্থেতে যে যে সংজ্ঞা অনুপযুক্ত বোধ হয় সেই সকল জ্ঞাত করাইলে এবং তৎপরীবর্ত্তনে অন্য সংজ্ঞা দেওনে পারক হইলে অত্যাহ্লাদ বিষয় হয় জানিবেন। অপর কেহ২ বিবেচনা করিয়া কহিয়াছেন যে সকলের সুবোধগম্য গ্রন্থ ছাপা কর না কেন এবং সহজ ভাষায় কি জন্যে রচনা কর না তদ্বিষয়ে উত্তর করি যে তাবদ্ বিদ্যাগ্রন্থ কঠিন অতএব সহজ ভাষায় তর্জ্জমা প্রায় হয় না। অপর ইহাও বিবেচনা করুন বহ্বাভ্যাসব্যতিরিক্ত কোনো এক বিদ্যাজ্ঞ হওয়া যায় না এবং যাঁহারা অভ্যাস করেন তাঁহারদের মধ্যে সকলেই পরিপক্ক হয় না তবে অনেক বিদ্যাতে সকলেই কি প্রকারে হঠাৎ

JOHN MACK 1797-1845

Among other Eurupean Missionary writers at Śrīrāmpur, the name of John Mack, unassuming as it is, is interesting to the student of the literary history of the time. He was born in March 12, 1797, a native of Edinburgh, his father having been a writer to the signet. He was educated at Edinburgh University and distinguished himself at the Baptist College at Bristol. On his visit to England during 1819-21 in search of funds and men for the proposed Serampore College, Ward selected Mack to be a Professor at the College, where the latter arrived in November 1821. Mack worked as a Professor for 16 years, succeeded Marshman in the charge of the College and raised it to be for some time a first-rate private educational institution in Bengal. Mack was highly proficient in Classics, Mathematics and Natural Science, and gave the first chemical lectures (in Bengali as well as in English) in Calcutta. He also shared the editorial management of the *Friend of India* at Śrīrāmpur from its commencement. He died of cholera in April 30, 1845.

HIS SCIENTIFIC WRITING

Mack's only, and in certain respects noteworthy, contribution to Bengali consists of a treatise on Chemistry, the first of its kind in Bengali, named কিমিয়া বিদ্যার সার। শ্রীযুত জান মাক সাহেবের কর্ত্তৃক রচিত হইয়া গৌড়ীয় ভাষায় অনুবাদিত হইল প্রথম খণ্ড, or the Principles of Chemistry by John Mack of Serampore College, vol. I. Serampore Press 1834. It is divided into 2 parts[1] the first part covering about 337 pages written in both English and Bengali (*recto* and *verso*). It is prefaced by an interesting introduction written in English. It opens with the treatment of কিমিয়া প্রভাব or chemical forces, such as আকর্ষণ, তাপক, আলোক, বিদ্যুতীয় সাধন, etc., and then goes on to

পরিপক্ক হইতে পারিবেন। (বিদ্যাহারাবলীগ্রন্থ পাঠকেরদের প্রতি মেং ফিলিক্স কেরী সাহেবের পত্রমিদং ।).

1 The second part was never possibly published.

deal with কিমিয়া বস্তু or chemical substances.[1] Many of the theories and conclusions stated here have long been abandoned, but they give us, through the medium of Bengali, a good picture of the state of the dimly understood chemical science as it obtained eighty years ago. Even after the lapse of more than half a century and with a better understanding and demand of this useful science, it is to be regretted that Bengali language cannot as yet boast of a single good treatise on Chemistry, not to speak of scientific literature in general; yet this missionary, with a scanty vocabulary and imperfect command over the language[2] ventured with singular courage and noble aim to open up a useful though neglected field of knowledge and culture. We cannot but speak with admiration of the work of these early missionary writers in all departments of useful knowledge, and we may be forgiven if

1 *Viz*, Oxygen, Chlorine, Bromine, Hydrogen, Nitrogen, Sulphur, Phosphorus, Carbon, Boron, Selenium. There is also a section on Steam Engine. Topics relating to metals and organic chemistry were reserved for a second volume which was never written.

2 In this connexion, it would be interesting to call attention to the question raised by Mack, which is also referred to by F. Carey but of which there seems to have been no satisfactory solution as yet, viz., the question relating to the proper method of compiling a glossary of technical scientific terms in Bengali. We quote here the opinion of Mack as set forth in the Preface to his work and leave it to speak for itself: "The names of Chemical substances are, in the great majority of instances, perfectly new to the Bengalee language ; as they were but a few years ago to all languages. In giving these new substances Bengalee names, the chief difficulty was to determine whether the European nomenclature should be merely put into Bengalee letters, or the European terms be entirely translated by Sungskrit, as bearing much the same relation to Bengalee as the Greek and Latin (from which the European terms are derived) do to English..........I have preferred, therefore, expressing the European terms in Bengalee character, merely changing the words into the prefixes and terminology, so as decently to incorporate the new language."—For a sketch of John Mack's life, see Carey, *Oriental Christian Biography*, vol. i., pp. 282-286. Also *Bengal Obituary*. Also monograph on John Mack in সাহিত্যসাধক চরিতমালা ৯৬ by Jogesh Chandra Bagal 1957.

we dwell rather long on this early Bengali treatise on a scientific subject. The object of this publication is thus given in the Preface: "Mr. Marshman having proposed some years ago to publish an original series of elementary works on history and science, for the use of youths in India, I count it a privilege to be associated with him in the undertaking and cheerfully promised to furnish such parts of the series as was more intimately connected with my own studies. Other engagements have retarded the execution of our project, much against our will. He has therefore been able to do no more than bring out the first part of his Brief Survey of History, and now, at length, I am permitted to add to it this first volume of the Principles of Chemistry." With the object of teaching rudiments of the science to the Indian youth in view, Mack thought it best to write his work in Bengali, scarcely fit though it was for the expression of scientific ideas. "Be it understood," he says, "the native youths of India are those for whom we chiefly labour; and their own tongue is the great instrument by which we hope to enlighten them." The book, chiefly meant to be a text-book, for which however its style is difficult enough, was compiled chiefly from the notes of lectures which the writer delivered to his pupils in Calcutta and Śrīrāmpur. It is hardly necessary to speak of its language and manner. We can hardly expect anything better than what we have already seen, for the theme here is science, the writer an Englishman and the Bengali is the Bengali of almost a century ago; yet it must be noted that the language of this work is more simple and easy certainly than that of Felix Carey or even of some of the more abstruse writers of scientific text-books of the present day. One or two specimens are selected here:

অনেক প্রকার বস্তুর কিমিয়ালয় উৎপন্ন হইলে আলোক নির্গত হয়। অতএব যে সময়ে দহন হয় সে সময় সকলেই জানে যে আলোক নির্গত হয় কিন্তু যে বস্তুতে কখন দহনোৎপত্তি হয় না সে বস্তুর লয়েতেও আলোক নির্গত হয়।

আলোক কিমিয়া প্রভাবের মত কোন২ বস্তুর পরস্পর লয়নিষ্পাদক এবং কোন২ বস্তুর লয়নাশক হয়। এই প্রকার কার্য্য পরে কহা যাইবেক। আলোক ও বিদ্যুতীয় সাধন কোন২ কার্য্য একরূপে নিষ্পন্ন করে। অপর সূর্য্যের তেজেতেও কিন্তু বিশেষ বিওলা (violet) বর্ণ কিরণেতে সূচি রাখিলে ক্রমে২ চুম্বক প্রস্তরের গুণ প্রাপ্ত হয় কিন্তু যে পরীক্ষাতে ইহা স্থিরীকৃত হয় তৎপরীক্ষাতে কিঞ্চিৎ সন্দেহ আছে (p. 107, sec. 160-161)।

হৈড্রজানের দ্বিতীয়াক্সিদ। সামুদ্রিক অম্লবিশিষ্ট জলের মধ্যে বারিমের পরমাক্সিদ রাখা গেলে তাহা কতক অক্সিজান হারাইয়া প্রথম অক্সিদ হয় এবং তদবস্থাতে উক্ত অম্লেতে লীন হয় এবং উপযুক্ত উপায় উপস্থিত হইলে ঐ হারান অক্সিজান জলের হৈড্রজানেতে লীন হইলে তাহাতে জলের দ্বিতীয়াক্সিদ জন্মে (p. 177, sec. 258)।

আলোকের চলন ও কার্য্যের দ্বারা অনেকে বোধ করে যে সে এক প্রকার বস্তু। কিন্তু কোন২ ব্যক্তি অনুমান করেন যে সে বস্তু নহে কেবল বস্তুর মধ্যগত একপ্রকার বিশেষ সংলড়ন দ্বারা উৎপন্ন (p. 103, sec. 150).

OTHER MISSIONARY WRITERS

Of the other missionaries, who belonged to the Baptist Mission and wrote some tracts and text-books, it is not necessary to dwell long upon the names of Lawson, Robinson, Wenger or Pearce. John Lawson (1787-1825) wrote a series of works on Natural History called পশ্বাবলী which was published by the School Book Society in Feb. 1822.[1] John Robinson, some time editor of the *Evangelist*, translated Robinson

1 It was meant to be in eight numbers in the first series but only six numbers were published, viz.: 1. The Lion and the Jackal (subsequently published as সিংহের বিবরণ) Feb. 1822. 2. The Bear, March 1822. 3. The Elephant, April 1822. 4. The Rhinoceros and the Hippopotamus, August 1822. 5. The Tiger. 6. The Cat. The second series was conducted by Ram Chandra Mitra (1814-1874) of Presidency College, Calcutta. For a sketch of Lawson's life see Carey, *Orient. Christ. Biography* (vol. ii. pp. 415-425). See Brajendranath Banerji, বাঙ্গালা সাময়িক পত্র (1346 B.S.) pp. 28-29.

Crusoe,[1] Bunyan's Holy War and Carey's Grammar into Bengali. John Wenger[2] (1811-1880), who was an associate of William Yates and revised his Bengali Bible (1861), edited the *Upadeśaka*, compiled a Bengali Grammar, translated Marshman's History, and wrote or edited a few tracts and school-books.

William Hopkins Pearce (1794-1840) who came out to India (1817) as an assistant of Ward and subsequently joined the Calcutta Baptist Printing Establishment, was for several years editor of the *Christian Observer* and wrote a few school-books[3] and Christian tracts. He is chiefly remembered now for his interest in education and his connexion with School Book Society in which he succeeded Yates as secretary.

1 (১) রবিন্‌সন্ ক্রুশোর জীবন চরিত or the Adventures of Robinson Crusoe translated by J. R. and illustrated with woodcuts. Serampore 1852 (2nd ed. 1885. pp. 1-261). (২) ধর্ম্মযুদ্ধের বৃত্তান্ত, অর্থাৎ আন্তরিক রিপু ও সয়তান প্রভৃতির সঙ্গে খ্রীষ্টীয় লোকেরদের যেরূপ যুদ্ধ হয় তাহার বিবরণ। জান ব্যনন সাহেবের রচিত ও রাবিন্‌সন্ সাহেবের কর্ত্তৃক অনুবাদিত হইয়া শ্রীরামপুরের যন্ত্রালয়ে মুদ্রাঙ্কিত হইল। ১৮৫৯। (Second Edition, 1859) illustrated also by woodcuts, pp. 1-316. Also wrote গঙ্গার খালের সংক্ষেপ বিবরণ or an Account of the Ganges Canal, pp. 1-19, 1854 ? (3) a Grammar (Serampore 1846) and (4) ইতিহাসের সংগ্রহ (Calcutta 1832) This Robinson must not be confounded with another Robinson who was Government Inspector of Schools in Assam and wrote a work on mensuration called ভূমি পরিমাণ (or Elements of Land Surveying) from Sibsagar in 1850 which was reviewed in the *Friend of India* of Sept. 12, 1850.

2 See Buckland's *Dictionary of Indian Biography*, Calcutta 1906.

3 His works, among other things, are: (*i*) ভূগোল বৃত্তান্ত। অর্থাৎ গোলাকার পৃথিবীস্থ দেশবিভাগ ও নদী ও পর্ব্বত ও নগর আর রাজত্ব ও ধর্ম্ম ও মনুষ্য সংখ্যা ও বাণিজ্য ও প্রাচীন সত্য ইতিহাস ইত্যাদি বিবরণ or Geography interspersed with information, historical and miscellaneous, for the use of schools in 6 parts. Calcutta 1818. Ed. in 1822; also in 1843. (*ii*) সত্য আশ্রয়। দুই পথিকের উভয়ে কথোপকথন or the True Refuge; a Christian tract. Calcutta ? 1822 ? W. H. Pearce must not

WILLIAM YATES 1792-1845

But the name of William Yates cannot be passed over so lightly. Yates, son of a shoe-maker and himself a village school-master for some time, was born at Loughborough, Dec. 15, 1792. He entered the Baptist College at Bristol where he studied the Oriental languages and came out to India on April 16, 1815 under the patronage of the Baptist Missionary Society. He joined Carey at Śrīrāmpur, studied Sanskrit and Bengali under him and helped him extensively in his literary work. In 1817 he left Carey and joined the Baptist Society at Calcutta, becoming pastor of the English Church at Lower Circular Road in 1829-30. In 1824 he became Secretary of the School Book Society and got large opportunities for carrying out his educational projects. His educational works received considerable encouragement from Government which not only subsidised him but offered him a stipend of £1,000 on condition of his devoting himself to such work—an offer which he declined.[1] He died at sea on July 3, 1845. His works in Bengali are numerous; they

be confounded with G. Pearce who wrote or edited (1) কালক্রমিক ইতিহাস। 1838 (2) ধর্ম্মপুস্তকের পাঠোপকারক or Companion to the Bible translated by Rām Kṛṣṇa Kabirāj and revised by G. Pearce. 1846. (3) বৈধর্ম্ম নিবারক পত্র। or Foolish Galatians or Inconstancy in Faith exposed and Antidote supplied (pp. 1-59), Calcutta 1845 ? For details about W. H. Pearce's life and writing see *Life of W. H. Pearce* by William Yates in J. Hoby's *Memoirs of William Yates*; *Bengal Obituary*, pp. 221-222; Carey, *Orient. Christ. Biography*, vol. iii, pp. 1-14 (a list of his works given at p. 10).

1 For more details about his life and work see James Hoby, *Memoirs of William Yates* (1847); *Dictionary of National Biography*; *Bengal Obituary*, pp. 222-225; Allibone's *Dictionary of British and American Authors*, vol. iii; *Cal. Chr. Observ.* 1845; *Cal. Rev.*, vol. x, p. 162 et seq.; *Catalogue of British and Foreign Bible Society*, 1857, p. 332, etc.; W. H. Carey, *Oriental Christian Biography*, vol. I. pp. 29, 48; *India Review*, vol. vii, 1843, pp. 740-743, in which will be found an excellent likeness of William Yates by Grant.

were all published between 1817 and 1827 and consist chiefly of:

1. The New Testament translated, 1833. Ed. in 1839.

2. The Holy Bible in Bengali. 1845. pp. 1-1144 (subsequently revised by J. Wenger and C. B. Lewis in 1861 and 1867).

3. হিতোপদেশ (expurgated edition). 1841.

4. প্রাচীন ইতিহাসের সমুচ্চয় or An Epitome of Ancient History containing a concise account of the Egyptians, Assyrians, Persians, Grecians and Romans, in English and Bengali (on recto and verso), pp. 623. This was compiled by Yates as secretary to the School Book Society. A large part of it was translated by Pearson (q. v.). 1830.

5. পদার্থ-বিদ্যা-সার। অর্থাৎ বালকেরদিগের পদার্থ শিক্ষার্থে কথোপকথন or Elements of Natural Philosophy and Natural History in a series of Familiar Dialogues designed for the instruction of Indian youth. Calcutta 1825. 2nd Ed. 1834. Published by the School Book Society.[1]

1 This work, although on a scientific subject, avoids scientific technicalities as much as possible and constitutes an eminently readable popular exposition of the broad topics of Natural Philosophy, and is indeed the first of its kind. The style and manner are more narrative than scientific. The form is that of a dialogue between a teacher and his pupil who is curious to acquire an insight into the mysteries of natural phenomena. This work is chiefly compiled from Martinet's Catechism of Nature and Baley's Useful Knowledge. The subjects embraced are too many but they are dealt with in a popular and rather summary way. After giving in the first few chapters some account of the mysteries of the Heavens (আকাশীয় গ্রহাদি বিষয়) and the atmosphere (স্থির বায়ু ও সামান্য বায়ু ও বাষ্পবৃষ্টি প্রভৃতির বিশেষ কথন), the teacher discourses on the earth (পৃথিবীর ও সমুদ্রের বিষয়) and the human being (মনুষ্য বিষয়ক কথা), and then goes on from the sixth dialogue to the description of the animal and the vegetable kingdoms, concluding with a few words on the minerals and on the products of various countries. Here is a specimen both of its science and its style:

6. *Introduction to the Bengalee Language* in two volumes. 1840. 2nd Ed. by J. Wenger, 1847. Containing a grammar, a reader and explanatory notes with an index and vocabulary (in vol. I) and selections from Bengali literature (in vol. II). The author's Preface says that "it consists of two volumes, the first of which is chiefly of European and the second entirely of native composition." The first volume contains a grammar, select reading lessons consisting of simple sentences, fables, anecdotes, etc.: while the second contains in "a condensed and corrected form" the best parts of all the Indian (mostly prose) compositions in Bengali. The selections are from Totā Itihās (18 tales), Lipimālā (9 letters), Batriś Siṃhāsan (14 stories), Rājābalī (8 extracts), Mahārāj Kṛṣṇachandra Rāyasya Charitram (8 extracts), Puruṣ-parīkṣā (16 stories), Jñān Chandrikā (9 pieces), Jñānārṇab (9 extracts), Prabodh-chandrikā (4 stories), besides extracts from Tathya-prakāś, Mahābhārat (story of Nala), hymns of Rām-mohon Rāy and specimens of the periodical literature of the day.

(7) জ্যোতির্বিদ্যা যুবলোকের শিক্ষার্থে or An Easy Introduction to Astronomy for young persons composed by James Ferguson F. R. S. and revised by David Brewster LL. D. and translated into Bengalee by William Yates. Calcutta School Book Society 1838[1].

শিষ্য। নক্ষত্রপতনের যে দর্শন হয় সেটা কি ?

গুরু। সে নক্ষত্রপতন নয় কিন্তু সূর্য্য সন্তাপদ্বারা যে কোন বস্তুর বাষ্প আকাশে উঠে তাহার মধ্যে স্ফুলিঙ্গ প্রবিষ্ট হওয়াতে তাহা প্রজ্বলিত হয়। তাহাতে যে পর্য্যন্ত সে সকল দগ্ধ না হয় তাবৎ ঐরূপ দর্শন হয়।

শিষ্য। রাত্রিকালে যে আলেয়ার দর্শন হয় সে কি ?

গুরু। অনুমান হয় যাহাতে অগ্নির যোগ আছে এমন কোন বায়ু বিশেষ হইবে কিম্বা মৃত বৃক্ষ ও পত্র হইতে নির্গত কোন সক্লেদ বস্তু অগ্নির স্ফুলিঙ্গের যোগ হওয়াতে প্রজ্বলিত হয়। (2nd edition, p. 14).

1 The Introduction (ভূমিকা) says: ফার্গুসন সাহেবের লিখিত এই পুস্তক সম্প্রতি শ্রীযুক্ত য়াতি সাহেব কর্তৃক বঙ্গভাষাতে রচিত হইল ইহা পাঠ করিলে যুবকেরা জ্যোতির্বিদ্যা জ্ঞাত হইতে পারিবে। This work is

(8) সারসংগ্রহ or Vernacular Class Book Reader for the Government Colleges and Schools translated into Bengali[1]. Calcutta Baptist Mission Press 1844.

(9) Translation of Dodridge's Rise and Progress of Religion. Anglo-Bengali. pp. 1-300, 1840 (Murdoch, *Catalogue*)[2].

ROBERT MAY 1788-1818

Of the other Missionary Societies, the London Mission which came into being a little later, took some part in the encouragement of Bengali and promotion of education

composed almost on the same lines as the author's পদার্থবিদ্যাসার। From the table of contents quoted below, the subjects of its ten chapters will be found to be pretty extensive: (*i*) পৃথিবীর গতি ও আকার পরিমাণের বিবরণ (pp. 1-16). (*ii*) সকল বস্তুর তোলন নিক্তি ও সূর্য্যাদিগ্রহ বিবরণ (pp. 17-35). (*iii*) গুরুত্ব ও দীপ্তির বিষয় (pp. 36-54). (*iv*) ইংরাজী ১৭৬১ সনে সূর্য্যের উপর শুক্রগ্রহের অতিক্রম এবং ঐ অতিক্রম দ্বারা প্রথমে যেরূপে সূর্য্য হইতে গ্রহগণের দূরত্ব নিশ্চয় হয় তাহার বিবরণ (pp. 54-68). (*v*) পৃথিবীর দীর্ঘতা ও প্রশস্ততা নির্ণয়ার্থক নিয়ম কথন (pp. 68-83). (*vi*) দিবারাত্রির হ্রাস বৃদ্ধির কারণ ও ঋতুগণের পরিবর্ত্ত ও চন্দ্রের ষোড়শ কলার বিবরণ (pp. 83-100). (*vii*) পৃথিবী প্রদক্ষিণকারি চন্দ্রের গতি ও চন্দ্র সূর্য্য গ্রহণের বিবরণ (pp. 100-118). (*viii*) সমুদ্রের জোয়ার ভাটার বিষয় (pp. 118-132). (*ix*) ধ্রুবতারার বিষয় ও সূর্য্য ও তারাগণের সময় বিশেষ নিরূপণ (pp. 132-136). (*x*) গ্রহাদি নিরূপণ (pp. 139-159).

1 For its contents see Jogesh Chandra Bagal in his monograph on William Yates in সাহিত্যসাধক চরিতমালা no. 96, 1957.

2 Besides these, Long (*Return of Names and Writings of 515 persons connected with Bengali Lit.* (Bengal Govt. Records Calcutta 1855) also mentions a translation of Dodridge's Rise and Progress; and the *Bengal Obituary* (p. 225) adds Pleasing Tales, Epitome of Ancient History (also Hobby, *op. cit.*, p. 211), Celebrated Characters of Ancient History, a translation of Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress Pt. I, and of Baxter's Call to the Unconverted (also Murdoch, *Catalogue*). Besides these, Yates, like many other missionaries mentioned here, wrote numerous Christian Tracts. He also wrote a *Bengalee Grammar*, ed. Wenger. Calcutta, 1849. See W. H. Carey, *Oriental Christian Biography*, vol. i, p. 44; also *India Review*, vol. vii, 1843.

through that medium. Many of its missionaries, in those early days of text-book writing, composed numerous educational works of value and usefulness ; but it would be sufficient for our purpose if we take into consideration the names Robert May, J. Harley, J. D. Pearson, and James Keith. The first three of these missionaries, however, whose names are linked together like those of the three Śrīrāmpur brethren, are remembered not so much for their literary efforts as in connexion with their numerous flourishing vernacular schools established between Kalna and Chinsurah. In July 1814, Robert May,[1] with a very narrow income, opened a free vernacular school in his dwelling house at Chinsurah but within a year he succeeded in establishing fifteen more schools with 951 scholars and obtained the patronage of Lord Hastings. May, however, was soon cut off by death.[2]

HARLEY (d. 1822) AND PEARSON 1790-1831

Harley and Pearson, who also belonged to the same society, succeeded in keeping up his work by the offer of their services. Robert May compiled in 1817 an arithmetical table on the Indian model which was popularly known for a long time as *May-Gaṇita*.[3] Harley supplemented May's work

1 See *Asiatic Journal*, vol. iii, 1817, p. 500 ; *Bengal Obituary*, p. 208 ; *Cal. Rev.* vol. 1850, art: *"Bengali Literature and Language"* ; Lushington, *History, Design and Present State of Benevolent Institutions in or near Calcutta*, 1824, pp. 145-155 ; Long, *Introduction to Adam's Reports*, London 1868, pp. 1-6 ; Long's *Handbook to the Bengal Missions*, London 1848 ; W. H. Carey, *Orient. Christ. Biography*, (in 3 vols. Calcutta 1850-52) vol. iii, pp. 294-298. For John Harley, see W. H. Carey, *op. cit.*, p. 134 et seq.

2 On the epitaph over Robert May's remains are written the following words: "In his life he was especially engaged in promoting the best interests of the rising generation, by whom his name will long be held in endearing recollection." (*Bengal Obituary*, p. 298).

3 গণিত (Gonito) or a Collection of Arithmetical Tables by R. May in Bengali, 8vo. Calcutta 1821. See *Catalogue E. I. Co's Library*, (1845), p. 268.

by his *Gaṇitāṅka* or গণিতাঙ্ক (Chinsurah 1819) compiled on a mixed model[1]. Pearson's works, however, were of greater value and effect than any of these. He was a very industrious and voluminous writer, and it is difficult to draw up a complete list of his writings, of which the following seem to be the more important ones:

(1) পত্রকৌমুদী or Letters on Familiar Subjects containing 260 letters on domestic, commercial and familiar subjects, zemindary accounts, and other forms in common use. 1819. 6th ed. in 1852. (Published by the School Book Society).

(2) পাঠশালার বিবরণ or Schoolmaster's Manual (Published by the School Book Society) 1819. Explains the Bell and Lancaster system.

(3) বাক্যাবলী or Idiomatical Exercises, English and Bengalee, with dialogues, letters, etc,, on various subjects. Calcutta 1820. A phrase-book and vocabulary. Published by the School Book Society. (Ed. Calcutta 1829: also 1839).

(4) নীতিকথা or Moral Tales composed jointly with Rājā Rādhākānta Deb for the School Book Society. Before 1821.

(5) Translation of Murray's English Grammar, 1820. [Mentioned also in *Catalogue E. I. Company's Library* (p. 267) as "Grammar of the English Language, English and Bengalee, Calcutta 1820"].

(6) প্রাচীন ইতিহাসের সমুচ্চয় or an Epitome of Ancient History, English and Bengalee, containing a concise account of the Egyptians, Assyrians, Persians, Grecians and Romans. The English was compiled by Pearson: the Bengali version by Yates, Pearson and others. Calcutta 1830, pp. 1-623. See above under Yates.

(7) ভূগোল ও জ্যোতিষ ইত্যাদি বিষয়ক কথোপকথন, English and Bengali. 1st ed. 1824. 2nd ed. Calcutta 1827.

1 See Carey, *Oriental Christian Biography*, vol. i, pp. 368-71. May's and Harley's Arithmetic were republished by the School Book Society.

(8) দুই মহা আজ্ঞা or the Two Great Commandments being an exposition of St. Matthew xxii. 37. Calcutta 1826.

(9) We find the following entry in Murdoch, *Catalogue*: "Pilgrim's Progress. Bengali and English by Rev. J. D. Pearson, chiefly from the Serampore Edition, 1834. 2nd Ed. Bengali alone. An Edition published by J. Wenger in 1853."[1]

(10) In the *Catalogue of E. I. Company's Library* (1845), p. 267, mention is made of "A School Dictionary, English and Bengali. 12mo. Calcutta 1829."

JAMES KEITH 1784-1822

Of James Keith, who came out to India in 1816 and belonged to the London Mission at Calcutta, it is said that "during his short career, in conjunction with H. Townly[2] he laid the foundation of a mission in the metropolis of India."[3] His chief works, educational or biblical, are (*i*) এক জন দরোয়ান ও মালী এই উভয়ের কথোপকথন or a Dialogue between a porter and a gardener. A Christian tract. 2nd ed., pp. 1-19. Serampore 1820 (?). 3rd ed. considerably modified, pp. 1-20, Calcutta 1835 (?). (ii) বালকেরদিগের শিক্ষার্থে স্পষ্ট প্রশ্নোত্তর ধারাতে বঙ্গভাষার ব্যাকরণ or a Grammar of the Bengalee language adapted to the young in easy questions and answers. Calcutta 1825, pp. 1-68; 3rd ed. Calcutta 1839. Published by the School Book Society.[4]

1 See also W. H. Carey, *Oriental Christian Biography*, vol. i, p. 370, for a list of Pearson's works.

2 Henry Townly was also a tract-writer in Bengali. Among his works may be mentioned (1) কোন শাস্ত্র মাননীয় or What Scriptures should be regarded, a Christian tract in the form of a dialogue between a Christian and a Hindu. Serampore 1820 ? (Ed. Calcutta Christian Tract and Bible Society 1836). pp. 1-12. (2) একজন পণ্ডিতের সাহত একজন সরকারের কথোপকথন। 2nd ed. pp. 1-16. (C. C. T. and B. S.)

3 See *Bengal Obituary*, pp. 67-68. Also *Asiatic Journal*, 1817, vol. iii, p. 500.

4 Dinesh Ch. Sen (*History*, p. 870) erroneously styles the author as Keat and his Grammar as Keṭ-Vyākaraṇ. The date given by him is

MINOR EUROPEAN WRITERS

It is not worth while to linger long over the names of other minor missionary or non-missionary writers who wrote religious tracts and educational text-books; for to give an exhaustive account of their names and writings would be to enumerate a Homeric catalogue.[1] We may, however, mention in passing the names of Herklotts,[2] Sutherland[3] and Sandys[4] who wrote chiefly on Geography; of Kempbell[5] and Kneane[6]

1820. It seems the book was not available to h:m when he wrote this account ; for otherwise this mistake is absurd. In *Catalogue of E. I. Co.'s Library*, mention is also made of Nītikathā or Fables in Bengali by J. Keith. Calcutta 1828. A specimen of the method and style of the Grammar is given below:

Interjection or আক্ষেপোক্তি বিষয়।

১ প্রশ্ন। আক্ষেপোক্তিতে কি বুঝা যায় ?

উত্তর। তাহাতে বক্তার শক্ত প্রমাণ বুঝা যায় ; যথা আঃ কি দুঃখ। উঃ কি জ্বালা। ইঃ কি বেদনা।

ওগো ওরে ওহে, আরে এরে ওলো এই সকল আক্ষেপোক্তি দূরস্থ ব্যক্তির পূর্ব্বে উক্ত হয় যথা ওগো বাবা ওরে রামহরি।

গো, হে, রে, লো. এই সকল আক্ষেপোক্তি বর্ত্তমান ব্যক্তির অগ্রে উক্ত হয়। যথা পিতা গো, হরি হে, মুটিয়া রে, ছুড়ি লো। (p. 41). It is curious to note such expressions occurring as আমি করা গিয়াছি (p. 35), আমি করা গেলাম (p. 62).

1 The activity of the Calcutta School Book and of School Society as well as the writings of authors like K. M. Banerji will be dealt with later, because, properly speaking, they belong to a subsidiary movement in literature which came into relief a decade later than the movement inaugurated by the missionaries of Śrīrāmpur or the Paṇḍits of Fort William College.

2 A Map of the World in Bengali by Rev. Gregory Herklotts of Chinsurah, 1824.

3 Geography of India by J. Sutherland.

4 General Geography in Bengali by Sandys, 1842.

5 Tucker's History of the Jews translated into Bengali, 1843, pp. 1-257.

6 Pārasika Itihās.

whose contributions were mostly historical; of Mundy,[1] Rouse,[2] and Hoeberlin[3] who were religious controversialists; of Miller,[4] Mendies[5] and Rozario[6] who were lexicographers; of Yule,[7] Weithrecht,[8] Rodt[9] and Bomwetsch[10] who composed easy reading lessons for children in schools. We may

1 বাইবেল প্রকাশিত ধর্ম্মের সহিত হিন্দুলোকেরদের শাস্ত্রোক্ত ধর্ম্মের তুলনা বিষয়ক পুস্তক or Christianity and Hinduism (2 pts. pp. 1-230. Cal. 1828) by George Mundy. G. Mundy was attached to C. M. S. at Chinsurah, latterly a pastor of the Coolie Bazar Chapel. Died 1853.

2 Rouse revised the Bengali Bible (1897). He wrote many tracts of which may be mentioned খ্রীষ্টীয় শিক্ষাবিষয়ক উপদেশমঞ্জরী or Plain Sermons on Christian Doctrine, pp. 1-148. 1881.

3 ধর্ম্ম পুস্তকের বৃত্তান্ত or Bible Stories translated from the German of Dr. Christian Gottlieb Barth by Mr. Hoeberlin. With 27 illustrations. pp. 1-252. 1846.

4 Bengali Dictionary 1801 (Long and *Biśvacoṣ*). But see above p. 81 footnote.

5 An abridgment of Johnson's Dictionary in English and Bengali, peculiarly calculated for the use of Native as well as European students, to which is subjoined a short list of French and Latin words and phrases in common use among English authors (Serampore Mission Press, 1822) by John Mendies. To Vol. II. is appended an Introduction to Bengali Language. Serampore 1828.

6 Bengali Dictionary, 1837.

7 শিশু বোধোদয় or Spelling Book with short sentences and verses.

8 শিশু শিক্ষা or Object Lessons, 1852.

9 (*a*) জ্ঞান কিরণোদয়: অর্থাৎ বালকবৃন্দের বোধবিধায়ক বিদ্যাবিষয়ক বিরচিত বৃত্তান্ত। pp. 1-92, Calcutta 1843. Another ed. 1849. (*b*) জ্ঞানারুণোদয়: অর্থাৎ বালক শিক্ষার্থে বঙ্গভাষায় বর্ণমালা। pp. 1-46, Calcutta 1841. (*c*) মুক্তিমীমাংসা। a Christian tract (see *Bengal Obituary*, p. 68). Rev. Randolph de Rodt (1814-1843) was attached to the London Missionary Society; he came out to India April 11, 1826. (See W. H. Carey, *Oriental Christian Biography*, p. 180.)

10 ১ম পাঠ। or Thirty Reading Lessons for the use of Children in Bengali Christian Schools (pp. 1-61. Calcutta? 1855?) by Rev. Christian Bomwetsch.

similarly pass over the names of William Morton,[1] a miscellaneous tract and text-book writer; of David Carmichael Smyth[2], author of a treatise on zemindary accounts; of George Galloway[3] who translated Gladwin's Pleasant Stories; of Captain Stewart[4],the founder of the Burdwan Church Mission;

1 (*a*) Proverbs of Solomon translated. 1843. (*b*) Biblical and Theological Vocabulary, English and Bengali compiled by William Morton and others, pp. 1-31. Calcutta 1845. (*c*) দৃষ্টান্ত বাক্য সংগ্রহ or a Collection of Proverbs, Bengali and Sanskrit, with their translation and application in English, pp. 1-160. Calcutta 1832. (*d*) দ্বিভাষার্থক অভিধান or Dictionary of the Bengali Language, with Bengali Synonyms and English interpretation. Calcutta 1828. (*e*) তথ্যপ্রকাশ অথ বজ্রস্থচী or a Treatise on Idol worship and other Hindu observances by Brajamohan Deb followed by translation from Vajrasūchi of Aśvagoṣa, pp. 60, 14 (Calcutta 1842) by William Morton. (Ed. in 1843).

2 জমিদারীর হিসাব or Original Bengalese Zumeendaree Account accompanied by a translation into English, pp. 1-401. Calcutta 1823. Smyth died in 1841. See *Bengal Obituary*.

3 মনোহর ইতিহাসমালা or Pleasant Stories of Gladwin's Persian Moonshee translated from the original Persian and English into the Bengalee language. Calcutta: printed by D'Rozario and Co., 1840.

4 (*a*) উপদেশ কথা (ইতিহাসের সুবচন) পরন্তু ইংলণ্ডীয়োপাখ্যানের চুম্বক । or Moral Tales of History with an historical sketch of England and her connexion with India, etc. (containing selections from L. M. Stretch's Beauties of History), pp. 1-68. Calcutta 1820. Dinesh Chandra Sen, *History* (pp. 869 and 870), enters the book twice as Upadesha Katha and Moral Tales of History without identifying them. (*b*) তমো নাশক অর্থাৎ দেবদেবী বিষয়ক বিবরণ or the Destroyer of Darkness, a Christian Tract. Printed at Calcutta 1828, pp. 1-20. Published by the Calcutta Christian Tract and Book Society, under the title তিমির নাশক in 1835.—For Stewart and Weitbrecht, see *District Gazetteer*, vol. on Burdwan in the Chap. on Education. Also see Long's Introduction to Adam's *Reports* (London 1868) ; Lushington, *History etc. of Religious and Benevolent Institutions in and near Calcutta*, Calcutta 1824, pp. 145-155. See Brajendra Nath Banerji, সাহিত্যসাধক চরিতমালা no. 88.

and of Dr. Hans Heinrich Eduard Roer who rendered into Bengali some of Lamb's Tales from Shakespeare.[1] The name of Sir Graves Champney Haughton, the scholar and orientalist, will detain us for a moment ; and with this last, though not the least important name, we close our chapter on the European writers in Bengali.

GRAVES CHAMPNEY HAUGHTON 1788-1849

Sir Graves Champney Haughton, son of John Haughton, a Dublin physician, was born in 1788. He was educated in England, and having obtained a military cadetship on the Bengal Establishment of the East India Company, he proceeded to India in 1808. In 1812 he joined the Fort William College where he received seven medals, three degrees of honour and various pecuniary rewards for his proficiency in Arabic, Persian, Hindustani, Sanskrit and Bengali. In 1815 his ill-health compelled him to leave for England. In 1817 he was appointed Professor of Oriental Languages at Haileybury where he continued till 1827. Haughton took great interest in the foundation of the Royal Society in London, of which he was an original member and honorary secretary from 1831 to 1833. He died of cholera at St. Cloud, near Paris, on August 28, 1849.[2]

Haughton was more of a scholar than a littérateur, and his works in Bengali have a philological rather than a purely literary interest. His works, chiefly useful compilations consisted of (1) *Rudiments Bengalee Grammar* (in English). London 1821, pp. 1-168. It was composed by order of the

1 মহাকবি সেক্ষপীয়র প্রণীত নাটকের মর্ম্মানুরূপ লেম্বস্ টেলের কতিপয় আখ্যায়িকা or Lamb's Tales from Shakespeare, translated by E. Roer, pp. 1-212. Calcutta 1853. (Bengal Family Library Series.)

2 For further informations, see *Gentleman's Magazine*, 1833, pt. ii, p. 76 ; biographical notice in *ibid*, 1849, pt. ii, p. 420 ; Annual Report. of the Royal Asiatic Soc. for May 1850 in vol. xiii of its *Journal*, pp. ii-v; *Alumni Oxoniences*, 1715-1886, ii. 626 : Allibone's *Dict. of British and American Authors*, Philadelphia 1859-75, vol. i.

Court of Directors and was based mainly on the works of Halhed and Carey. (2) *Bengalee Selection* (from Chaṇḍīcharaṇ's translation of Totā Itihās, from Mṛtyuñjay's Bengali version of Hindi Siṃhāsana Battisi, and from Haraprasād Rāy's translation of Bidyāpati's Sanskrit Puruṣ-parīkṣā) with translation into English and a vocabulary, pp. 1-198, London 1822. Edition by D. Forbes, London 1869. (3) *Glossary*. Bengali and English, to explain the Totā Itihāsa, the Batriś Siṃhāsan, the History of Rājā Kṛṣṇa Chandra. the Puruṣ Parīkṣā, and the Hitopadeś, pp. 1-124. London 1825. (4) *A Bengalee-English Dictionary* compiled by order of the Court of Directors, London 1833. These useful works, once held in esteem, are still valuable, but it is rather the Bengali language than Bengali literature which owes its debt of gratitude to Haughton.

CHAPTER IX

GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS

We have now closed the survey of a period of nineteenth century literature in Bengal, which is covered principally by European writers and their colleagues and which, if not the greatest, is at least one of the most important in its literary history. Although not rich in positive accomplishment, this and the period of transition which followed it, had been the great school-time of modern literature, periods in which the unconscious experiments of Carey and his colleagues were made, expanded, and multiplied, sometimes with the conscious purpose of developing a prose *style* and always with the practical effect of doing so, by writers in widely diverging branches of literature. To appreciate, much less to enjoy, the rudimentary publications of this period would require a certain amount of patience and catholicism, if not a kind of pre-established harmony of taste, in the reader; yet the importance of this period is not to be underrated on that account. Although it was a stage necessarily unproductive, it was yet the period of germination, and an acquaintance with it is helpful for the understanding and enjoyment of the rich harvest which our literature had subsequently borne within the last half of the century.

A PERIOD OF EUROPEAN ACTIVITY

With the old caution about constant overlapping of tendencies, it would not be wrong to state that this was chiefly a period of European activity in Bengali literature. It is true indeed that there was a strong and unmastered counter-current of native energy which expressed itself in the songs of the Kabiwālās and other products of purely indigenous genius, not the least affected by the new spirit; yet when we consider the

Europeanised tendency of modern Bengali literature, its new literary method and new mode of expression, we cannot but give a greater prominence to European activity and spread of European ideas. The older traditions still continued to live on, and an antagonism between the old and the new spirit is traceable throughout the literary history of the 19th century. But we give greater importance to the Europeans because it is the spirit of their work, aided no doubt by the inexorable hand of circumstances, which was to dominate in the end and determine the final bent of modern literature.

ITS TRANSITIONAL CHARACTER

The description which suggests itself for the quarter of a century from 1800 to 1825 is that of the Early or first Transition Period ; for it marks the first great advance from the old to the new, although another period of progress was necessary to bring about in its fulness the dawn of modern literary Bengali. The changes of the period are many and far-reaching and everywhere transitional in character. In politics and social affairs, the conflict between the old and the new was gradually taking shape, and there was unrest and uncertainty everywhere consequent upon such conflict. In linguistic matters, we find not only profit and loss in details of vocabulary but also an innovation in the direction of a simpler syntax. But in literature, although the ancient trend of thought and feeling was to some extent being continued in the popular Kabi-songs and other indigenous forms of literature, the British contact did not fail to bring about changes of the gravest kind, in relation to its material, its form and its literary temper. The field of literary adventures was enlarged, and since the tentative efforts resulting from these innovations took, for the most part, the form of their models, radical changes in literary form became palpable. The changes in literary temper were so subtle and varied that no summary description would be adequate but that it was marked by a greater desire for individual liberty. The

age became more and more articulate and forthwith responded to contemporary influences. The old schools were being upset, and the representative character of the old literature which was becoming more and more urbane and artificially limited to a select few who could appreciate its new ideas and novel forms, was lost in the attempt, mostly by untrained hands, to imitate foreign literary methods and models.

COLLEGE OF FORT WILLIAM AND ŚRĪRĀMPUR MISSION

Leaving aside the indigenous forms of literature for separate treatment, the first portion of this period (1800-1815), which was indeed a stage of timid experiment, was for the most part a period of European authorship, varied by occasional imitations by scarcely original Indian authors, the chief centre of literary publication being the Fort William College. We have traced at some length the connexion of this college with the history and growth of Bengali literature in the early years of British settlement ; and its importance is undoubted. It was here indeed that modern Bengali literature, especially Bengali prose, received its first exercising ground and without its co-operation it is doubtful whether even the Śrīrāmpur Mission, an institution equally important to Bengali literature, could have achieved the remarkable success which it actually did. The two institutions, the Fort William College and the Śrīrāmpur Mission, founded at the same time yet so dissimilar to each other in their aim and object, found themselves connected with each other by at least one bond of close kinship, namely, the encouragement which both afforded to the study of Bengali. We shall realise how close this relationship was when we bear in mind that almost all the publications of the College were printed at the Śrīrāmpur Press and that, on the other hand, it was the Mission which supplied the College with scholars and professors of Bengali. In this respect, each supplemented the work of the other. Indeed before the missionaries came in contact with the

College of Fort William through the appointment of Carey as Professor of Bengali, their work in the field of Bengali prose had been very slight. In the meantime they had only succeeded in translating and printing off the Bengali Bible, but in this again they had rendered only a doubtful service to Bengali prose. The Mission was too poor and too insignificant to undertake extensive literary work of a permanent kind; and on political and other grounds the missionaries had all along been held in disfavour. The first political recognition of the Mission and its worthy object with reference to the study of Bengali came with the appointment of Carey as Professor in Lord Wellesley's newly established College. Under the patronage, pecuniary and otherwise, of the College, a fresh impetus was given to the study of Bengali. But even then the stringent regulations which had fettered the press in India and other political restrictions stood in the way of intellectual progress, and it was not until another decade or so had passed that a more liberal and far-sighted policy was adopted. It may also be noted here that the benefit rendered to Bengali by all these early institutions was never direct but came indirectly and therefore with occasional fluctuations through their encouragement of the study of the language itself on political and other utilitarian grounds.

EUROPEAN PATRONAGE ; ITS EFFECT

This European patronage, however, was attended with both loss and gain to Bengali Literature. It is dangerous to dogmatise about influences but it cannot be denied that, speaking generally, it was the intellectual stimulus given by British contact which raised Bengali Literature out of the slough of general decadence into which it had been plunged after the death of Bhāratchandra. The vernacular was raised if not above, at least on the same level with, the classical languages, which had hitherto held undisputed sway. But the literature of Bengal, which had belonged

to the people in general, shifted its centre of activity from the peaceful village-homes to the crowded cities and the metropolis, and under the patronage of an alien lettered class, imbued with new ideas and novel methods, it lost its representative character, its primitive colouring and its pristine simplicity. It is true that the literary spirit of the people, even though arrested temporarily, never died out and that the last echoes of the great Baiṣṇab and Śākta writers still lingered faintly in their less worthy successors, the Kabiwālās, the Yātrākars, the Kathakas or the Pāñchālikars, through whom they have coloured even our modern ways of thought; yet when the literature revived, with the creation of a new lettered class and a new public, it revived with a difference.

AN ERA OF PROSE; ITS FORMAL IMPORTANCE

It will be seen, however, that this era of Bengali literature is essentially an era of prose, and one of its greatest achievements is indeed the creation of modern prose-of-all-work. The prose of the first decade of the century, however, that we are passing in review, has little or nothing delectable to a mere literary taster, but to the critical student it possesses great interest and importance. For this was indeed the beginning of Bengali prose properly so called; for before 1800, it may be doubted whether, in spite of the large number of old philosophical and religious prose-works now discovered, there is a single Bengali prose work of any importance, which unites the bulk and literary quality of a book proper. It is true indeed that the prose of the early 19th century (chiefly tentative in character) is comparatively clumsy and inartistic, but its formal importance in literary history can never be denied; and even within this shapeless mass, there is a full pulse of life that may be detected by any careful reader who does not associate old books with mummies. But in order to appreciate this importance, we must at the outset obtain some idea of the conditions under which it came about and developed so rapidly within a few years.

THE LANGUAGE OF THE PAṆḌITS

Modern Bengali prose, like modern Bengal itself, came into being under anomalous conditions. After the death of Bhāratchandra and with the disappearance of the great Baiṣṇab and Śākta writers the literature of Bengal was left to shift for itself, uncontrolled by the power of any individual native genius, which alone, by "dwelling apart" in an age of conflicting influences, could have helped to guide it. The European writers, who took the lead in the matter at the beginning of the 19th century, had little experience of Bengal and much less of Bengali literature; in matters of composition, they took as their guide, not the ancient writers of Bengal, who were by this time hopelessly entombed in a mass of old inaccessible manuscripts, but the great Bhaṭṭāchāryas or Ṭol Paṇḍits who, on account of their classical accomplishments, were thought fit to write in the vernacular tongue. But these learned Paṇḍits, who traded upon the general ignorance of the people and treated the vernacular with contempt, knew nothing of old Bengali literature, but with a confidence born of untraining and in their eagerness to display their classical learning, they affected a pedantic sanskritised style which was more than what the language could bear. Their very erudition proved their greatest disqualification; and their unwieldy style and its uncouth form, betraying all the absurd defects of an untrained hand, were wholly out of accord with the genius of the language. The Duke of Wellington said of a certain peer that "it was a great pity his education had been so far too much for his abilities." In like manner, one often sees the erudition of these Paṇḍits prove too much for their abilities. In justice to these learned Paṇḍits, however, it must be said that some of them honestly believed in the efficacy of the sanskritised style, which was supposed to add dignity to the flat and colourless vernacular, and that if they did not write easily, they wrote correctly; only this partiality for Sanskrit or use of সাধুভাষা (high style) was often carried

to the extreme. We have seen how the learned author of *Prabodh-chandrikā* at the beginning of his work extols Sanskrit as the best of all languages[1]; but he prefers to write in Bengali inasmuch as it is the best of the vernaculars on account of the preponderance of Sanskrit in it (অন্যান্য দেশীয় ভাষা হইতে গৌড়দেশীয় ভাষা উত্তমা সর্ব্বোত্তমা সংস্কৃতভাষাবাহুল্য হেতুক). This may be taken fairly as the opinion of the Bhaṭṭāchāryas generally who now made it their province to patronise Bengali. In Bk. II, Chap. i of the same work again, Mṛtyuñjay, while discoursing on the beauties and defects of prose style, quotes and analyses the following sentences as exhibiting various rhetorical qualities: "ইন্দুতে ইন্দীবরস্থন্দর চিহ্ন চারু ছাব বিস্তার করে। কামিনী কাঞ্চী মঞ্জীর মঞ্জু সিঞ্জিত করে (প্রসাদগুণ)। নীলোৎপল ক্রীড়াসরোরুহ হেমাঙ্গদ পীনপয়োধর স্থধাংশুমুখী মদঘূর্ণিতলোচনা মদনমদালসবিলাসিনী স্তনভরনমিতাঙ্গী গুরুনিতম্বভারমন্থরা মলয়নন্দনগন্ধবাহ কোকিলকলকূজিত বসন্তকুস্থমামোদস্থরভীকৃত দিঙ্মুখ (উদারগুণ)। অস্তপর্ব্বত মস্তকপর্য্যস্ত পর্য্যস্ত সূর্য্যারুণবর্ণ কিরণরূপবসনা যে বারুণী দিক্ সে পীনস্তনস্থলস্থিত নির্ম্মলতাম্রকম্রবস্ত্রা তরুণীর তুল্য শোভা পাইতেছে (ওজঃগুণ)। কোকিলকুলকলালাপবাচাল যে মলয়ানিল সে উচ্ছলচ্ছীকরাত্যচ্ছ নির্ঝরাম্ভঃকণাচ্ছন্ন হইয়া আসিতেছে (সাম্যগুণ)। (প্রবোধচন্দ্রিকা, দ্বিতীয় স্তবক, প্রথম কুসুম)।

These examples would clearly indicate the kind of style which was highly favoured and the length to which this sanskritisation was carried.[2]

THE LANGUAGE OF THE KĀYASTHAS ; COURT LANGUAGE

But long before the Bhaṭṭāchāryas affected this stiff, laboured and pedantic diction, another style of expression,

1 See extract quoted at p. 198.

2 Of these Paṇḍits, Mṛtyuñjay, though he affected an artificially correct and learned diction, was fully alive to the sense of style and knew the value of appropriate phrasing. In one place, he writes in

chiefly favoured by the court-going or commercial Kāyasthas, was already extensively prevalent and sometimes found its way into the more serious compositions of the time. It was a kind of half-Bengali and half-Persian diction, which was the language of the court and the market-place and of which we have seen a subdued specimen in the style of *Pratāpāditya Charitra.* Ever since the time of Muhammedan conquest, Persian words and expressions or their modified Urdu forms[1] were gradually finding their way into Bengali vocabulary, and the necessity of their being used, more or less, in everyday conversation, no doubt facilitated the process. By the time the *Chaṇḍī* of Kabikaṅkaṇ was composed Persian was already extensively used even in the verse-compositions of the period. The following quotation, in which in nine verses more than eighteen Persian words will be found, will show how in a short time Bengali put on a novel aspect through its admixture with Persian.

সহর সিলিমাবাজ তাহাতে সজ্জনরাজ
নিবসে নিয়োগী গোপীনাথ।
তাঁহার তালুকে বসি দামিন্যায় চাষ চষি
নিবাস পুরুষ ছয় সাত॥

his quaint way: শাস্ত্রে বাক্যকে গো শব্দে যে কহিয়াছেন তাহার কারণ এই ভাষা যদি সম্যকরূপে প্রয়োগ করা যায় তবে স্বয়ং কামদুঘাধেনু হন যদি দুষ্টরূপে প্রয়োগ করা যায় তবে সেই দুষ্ট ভাষা স্বনিষ্ঠগোত্বধর্ম্মকে স্বপ্রয়োগ-কর্ত্তাতে অর্পণ করিয়া স্ববক্তাকে গোরূপে পণ্ডিতেরদের নিকটে বিখ্যাত করেন। ……আর বাক্য কহা বড় কঠিন সকল হইতে কহা যায়না কেন না কেহ বাক্যেতে হাতি পায় কেহ বা বাক্যেতে হাতির পায়। অতএব বাক্যেতে অত্যল্প দোষও কোন প্রকারে উপেক্ষনীয় নহে কেন না যদ্যপি অতিবড় সুন্দরও শরীর হয় তথাপি যৎকিঞ্চিৎ একশিত্র রোগ দোষেতে নিন্দনীয় হয় (প্রবোধ চন্দ্রিকা, প্রথম স্তবক, চতুর্থ কুসুম, পৃঃ ২৪)।

1 A pretty good but by no means exhaustive list of Arabic and Persian words used in Bengali will be found in *Sāhitya Pariṣat Patrikā*, vol. viii, also vol. xii.

ধন্য রাজা মানসিংহ বিষ্ণুপদে যেবা ভৃঙ্গ
গৌড়-বঙ্গ-উৎকল-মহীপ।
অধর্ম্মী রাজার কালে প্রজার পাপের ফলে
খিলাৎ পায় মামুদ সরিপ॥
উজীর হইলা রায়জাদা ব্যাপারীরে দেয় খেদা
ব্রাহ্মণ বৈষ্ণবে হলো অরি।
মাপে কোণে দিয়া দড়া পোনের কাঠায় কুড়া
নাহি শুনে প্রজার গোহারি॥
সরকার হইলা কাল খিল ভূমি লেখে লাল
বিনা উপকারে খায় ধুতি।
পোদ্দার হইল যম টাকা আড়াই আনা কম
পাই লভ্য লয় দিন প্রতি॥
ডিহিদার অবোধ খোজ কড়ি দিলে নাহি রোজ
ধান্য গোরু কেহ নাহি কেনে।
প্রভু গোপীনাথ নন্দী বিপাকে হইলা বন্দী
হেতু কিছু নাহি পরিত্রাণে॥
কোতোলিয়া বড় পাপ সজ্জনের কাল সাপ
কড়ির কারণে বহু মারে।
আথালি পাথালি কড়ি লেখাজোখা নাহি দেড়ি
যত দিয়া যেবা নিতে পারে॥
জমাদার বসায় কাছে প্রজারা পালায় পাছে
দুয়ার জুড়িয়া দেয় থানা।
প্রজার ব্যাকুল চিত্ত বেচে ধান্য গোরু নিত্য
টাকার দ্রব্য হয় দশ আনা॥
সহায় শ্রীমন্ত খাঁ চণ্ডীবাটী যার গাঁ
যুক্তি করি গম্ভীর খাঁর সনে।
দামিন্যা ছাড়িয়া যাই সঙ্গে রমানাথ ভাই
পথে চণ্ডী দিলা দরশনে॥ [1]

1 *Kabikankan Chandī*, ed. by Akshay Kumar Sarkar in *Prāchīn-*

PREPONDERANCE OF PERSIAN WORDS AND FORMS

This lengthy extract is quoted not only to show the preponderance of Persian words and forms but it will also be noticed from the descriptions contained here that Bengal, then divided into Tāluks, was governed by officers like Vizir, Koṭāl, Sarkār, Dihidār, Jamādār, etc.; that Hindu cities or villages have already taken Muhammedan names; that people are getting *khelāts* as a sign of royal favour; that men like Śrīmanta or Gambhīra had been adorned with Muhammedan titles of distinction; and that, on the whole, Muhammedan ideas and customs had penetrated into the very fabric of Indian society. It is not surprising therefore that in the age of Rājā Kṛṣṇachandra, Bhāratchandra Rāy, himself a man of sound culture possessing considerable knowledge of Sanskrit, could not escape the fascination of a mixed language and the influence of Persian ideas [1] We find him saying, therefore, while describing a conversation between Emperor Jahāngīr and Rājā Mānasiṃha:

মানসিংহ পাতসার হইল যে বাণী
উচিত সে পারশী আরবী হিন্দুস্থানী ॥
পড়িয়াছি যেই মত বর্ণিবারে পারি
কিন্তু সে সকল লোক বুঝিবারে ভারি ॥
না রবে প্রসাদগুণ না হবে রসাল
অতএব কহি ভাষা যবনী মিশাল ॥

It is not unusual, therefore, that writing in 1778, Halhed in the Preface to his *Grammar* says: "At present those persons are thought to speak this compound idiom (Bengali) with the greatest elegance who mix with pure Indian verbs the greatest number of Persian and Arabic nouns." It is in

Kabi-saṁgraha, pt. ii, p. 5. Slightly different readings are given in other editions.

1 It is well-known, for instance, that much of the famous description of his heroine's beauty is derived from Persian sources.

the court-language, however, which still favoured a preponderance of effete Persian forms, that the largest percentage of Persian words are to be found; and the following extract of a petition, given in an appendix to Halhed's *Grammar*, will show how persianisation was carried even to a far greater length than was ever done by the authors of *Pratāpāditya Charitra* of *Totā Itihās*:

শ্রীরাম। গরিব নেওাজ শেলামত। আমার জমিদারি পরগণে কাকজোল তাহার দুই গ্রাম দরিয়া শীকিস্তি হইয়াছে সেই দুই গ্রাম পয়স্তী হইয়াছে চাকালে একব্বরপুরের শ্রীহরেকৃষ্ট চৌধুরি আজ রায় জবরদস্তী দখল করিয়া ভোগ করিতেছে। আমি মালগুজারির শরবরাহতে মারা পড়িতেছি উমেদওয়ার জে শরকার হইতে আমি ও এক চোপদার শরজমিনেতে পহুচিয়া তোরফেনকে তলব দিয়া আদালত করিয়া হক দেলাইয়া দেন। ইতি সন ১১৮৫ তারিখ ১১ শ্রাবণ। ফিদবি জগতধির রায়।

It will be noticed, however, that about this time a reaction was setting in in favour of the use of Bengali, and the lengthy prefaces to Forster's *Vocabulary* and Halhed's *Grammar*, which detail at some length the arguments in favour of the study of Bengali, bear witness to this reversion of popular feeling. Bengali, at this time, officially as well as popularly, was an unrecognised vernacular ; and both Halhed and Forster rightly insist upon the absurdity and inconvenience of continuing the use of Persian in courts of law. Colebrooke[1] pays a high eulogy to Halhed and Forster for having brought the scientific study of Bengali within easy reach; but to them also, as well as to other later writers, both Indian and foreign, belongs the credit of making Bengali not only the official language of the province but also the basis of one of the most prolific literary languages of India.

While the Ṭol Paṇḍits and the court-scribes were attempting to bring Bengali under the lead of Sanskrit and Persian

1 *Asiatic Researches*, vol. vii, 1799, p. 224.

respectively, the language in the country-places, among "low men", and the people generally, was the unforbidden, if untaught, Bengali, which we find in the old writers and of which we find a distant echo in the outbursts of purely native inspiration like those of the Kabiwālās, Yātrākars, Kathakas, and Pāñchālikars. A little sanskritised on the one hand and a little persianised on the other, the language preserved the equipoise perfectly and drew its nerve and vigour from the soil itself. It was so direct in its simplicity, so dignfied in its colloquial ease, and so artful in its want of art that it never failed to appeal. Not a single latter-day writer, as the foremost among them himself acknowledges, has been able to speak in the same tongue. While speaking of this language of the people in its contrast to modern mixed literary diction, Baṅkimchandra lamented[1]: "আজিকার দিনে অভিনব ও উন্নতির পথে সমারূঢ় সৌন্দর্য্যবিশিষ্ট বাঙ্গালা সাহিত্য দেখিয়া অনেক সময় বোধ হয়, হৌক সুন্দর কিন্তু এ বুঝি পরের আমাদের নয়। খাঁটি বাঙ্গালা কথায় বাঙ্গালীর মনের ভাব ত খুঁজিয়া পাই না। তাই ঈশ্বরগুপ্তের কবিতা সংগ্রহে প্রবৃত্ত হইয়াছি।" Īśvar Gupta[2] whose tone and temper allied him with the Kabiwālās, was indeed the last of that blessed race over whom the confusion of Babel had not yet fallen.

It must not be supposed here that we are advocating purism in the matter of language or lamenting over the prevalence of Sanskrit, Persian or other influence. "Purism" to quote the words of a learned writer in the *Calcutta Review*[3] "is radically unsound and has its origin in a spirit of narrowness. In the free commingling of nations, there must be borrowing and giving. Can anything be more absurd than to

1 ঈশ্বর গুপ্তের কবিতা সংগ্রহের মুখবন্ধ। Preface to the *Kabitā Saṁgraha* of Īśvar Chandra Gupta. Ed. by Bankim Chandra Chatterjee and Gopal Chandra Mukerjee in 2 pts. (1895)

2 But here of course we are speaking of Īśvar Gupta's poetry and not his prose.

3 Śyāmā Charaṇ Gāṅguli, *Calcutta Review*, 1878.

think of keeping language pure when blood itself cannot be kept pure? No human language has ever been perfectly pure, any more than any human race has been pure. Infusion of foreign elements do, in the long run, enrich languages, just as infusion of foreign blood improves races." But in the beginning of the last century, the conflict of foreign elements under which Bengali prose came for a time proved a source of confusion to many a writer of the period. Lexicographers and grammarians like Halhed, Forster and Carey are always complaining, in their bewilderment, of the confusing variety and the exceedingly corrupt state of the vernacular due to its subjection to various foreign influence;[1] for the many political revolutions the country had sustained and its long communication with men of different religions, countries and manners had impaired the simplicity of the vernacular and rendered it somewhat difficult for a foreigner. Not only did the Paṇḍits incorporate unfamiliar Sanskrit words and constructions and the Muhammedans various Persian terms relating chiefly to business, law and government, the European nations too who settled here, never failed to influence the language and naturalise into it words of European origin.

THE PORTUGUESE ELEMENT IN BENGALI

Of these, the Portuguese, before the British, have left behind them the largest traces in the country as well as in the language. The Portuguese extended their trade to Bengal a little before 1530; and after temporarily settling at Betaḍ (বেতড়) near Śibpur, and then at Saptagrām (Sātgāon) they finally colonised at "Golin" (near Bandel) at about 1537 or 1538.[2] In a short time, they became a formidable political power, and their wealth, daring roguery and naval and military activity made them dreaded all over the country.

1 See Halhed's and Forster's remarks quoted above at pp. 77-78 and 82 respectively.

2 Stewart, *History of Bengal*, quoting (ed. 1847, p. 1531) Faria Y Souza. Golin has been supposed to be the same as Ugolyn, a Portuguese form of Hooghly.

About the end of the 16th century they settled at Barānagar near Calcutta, and soon entered the Sunderbuns, gradually spreading over Eastern Bengal, where as pirates, adventurers and extensive dealers in slave-trade, they soon obtained a dreaded reputation.[1] Their head-quarter in East Bengal was Chittagong, which, being more accessible by the sea, was called the Porto Grando; while Hooghly, their central colony in West Bengal, was named Porto Pequeno. Portuguese language came naturally with the Portuguese power and for about two centuries and a half even survived its extinction. "It was," to quote Marshman,[2] "the Lingua Franca of all foreign settlements around the Bay of Bengal and was the ordinary medium of conversation between the European and their domestics" even down to so late a period as 1828. It is easy to see that such ne'er-do-well adventurers as Portuguese pirates could hardly ever be expected to exert any properly literary influence, and their only point of contact with Bengali was through the medium of language.[3] They supplied its vocabulary with appellation of European arts and invention, names of many fruits, herbs and trees (আনারস, etc.) which they had brought over from South America or elsewhere, certain terms of gambling (Primero প্রেমেরা etc.) and even common everyday expressions like কেদারা, জানালা, ফিতা, গির্জ্জা, জোলাপ, আলমারি, আলপিন, বাল্তি, গামলা, প্রেক্, চাবি, বরগা, etc. The common form of the oath "মাইরি" is even supposed

1 There is an allusion to their piracy and their use of হারামদ (Armada or Warship) in the *Chaṇḍī* of Kabikaṅkaṇ:

ফিরাঙ্গির দেশখান বহে কর্ণধারে ।
রাত্রিতে বাহিয়া যায় হারামদ ডরে ॥

2 *History of Serampore Mission*, vol. i, pp. 21-22.

3 For an account of Portuguese influence and Portuguese element in Bengali, see *Sāhitya Pariṣat Patrikā*, vol. xviii, p. 45 et seq. where a good list of Portuguese words naturalised in Bengali will also be found. See also *Hobson-Jobson* ed. Yule and Burnell. J. A. Campos in his *History of the Portuguese in Bengal* (1919) has also given a list of Portuguese words in Bengali.

to be a corrupt form of the name of the Virgin. It will be seen, however, that this Portuguese influence on Bengali was, on the whole, comparatively slight; and it never succeeded in affecting the current mode of expression nor went beyond introducing a limited number of terms into its vocabulary.[1]

THE LANGUAGE OF BRITISH WRITERS IN BENGALI

But the British influence on Bengali, owing to its permanent and all-embracing character, was more deep and far-reaching. In matters of language, however, the British writers at the outset, we have seen, found themselves in an embarrassed position. They did not know in the midst of perplexing diversity what models to choose or what form of the language to adopt. They, however, took primarily as their guide the compositions of their own Munsis or Paṇḍits, which leaned towards persianisation or sanskritisation; but fortunately their strong commonsense, their literary instinct and an innate tendency to realism[2] saved them from the contagion of affectation and made them adopt a more simple and natural style. Their language is a curious admixture of the sanskritised style of the Paṇḍits (সাধুভাষা) and the colloquial language of the people (চলিতভাষা) with some peculiarities of its own, and a more or less decided leaning towards the latter. The missionaries and the school-masters, to whose rank and file belong most of the early European writers in Bengali, lived in closest touch with the people, and their chief end in writing was not to show off their erudition but to make themselves intelligible, to be popular, clear and useful. There are, it is true, errors and excesses in their writing as vexatious as the stiffness of the Paṇḍits, and the missionary Bengali has always been the sport of criticism. But, inspite of these and other aberrations, the general excellence of their style in one direction at least can never be

1 The first Bengali Grammar and Dictionary was in Portuguese. See p. 67, above.

2 See the remarks on Carey's *Dialogues* at p. 133.

disputed, namely, that its simplicity, precision, and directness present a striking contrast to the sesquipedalian affectation of the Sanskrit Paṇḍits or the mixed jargon of the persianised Munsis. Carey and his coadjutors brought to their task, that of translation and tract-writing, a combination of education and object. They were men all trained in the severe science of theological study; and they always strove to be exact and intelligible to the people. Their training compelled them to be precise and their object compelled them to be forcible. No better exercising ground for an infant prose, in at least some ways, could have been provided than the combined one of translation and polemic. The utilitarian end of these European writers, their realistic tendency, their position, influence and attainment directed the whole movement towards simplicity and naturalness; and it is well worthy of note that even some of the learned Paṇḍits of the Fort William College, through their example, did not despise to adopt occasionally the popular *patois* of the country.[1]

OPPOSITION BETWEEN THE PLAIN AND THE ORNATE STYLE

Thus, it will be seen that, at the beginning of the 19th century there were, roughly speaking, four different ways or modes of expression, struggling to gain ground and competing for mastery, namely, পণ্ডিতী ভাষা, আদালতী ভাষা, চলিত ভাষা and সাহেবী বাঙ্গালা. Of these, the আদালতী ভাষা (court-language) in course of time, with the general disuse and discontinuance of Persian in law-courts, became almost extinct; and by 1836 we find but little trace of it, except in a few legal technical publications. The spoken idiom (চলিত ভাষা) favoured chiefly by the old school of writers like the Kabiwālās and used in country-places, never came into any direct prominence.

1 See, for example, the story of বিশ্ববঞ্চক in Mṛtyuñjay's *Prabodh-chandrikā*, দ্বিতীয় স্তবক, প্রথম কুসুম, part of which is quoted above at pp. 201 f.

The only two forms of style which stood in sharp antithesis to each other in the prose publications of the time and continued to play an important part in the literary history down to the fifties, were the learned style (পণ্ডিতী ভাষা), on the one hand, and the missionary style (সাহেবী বাঙ্গালা), on the other. The exclusive class of learned Paṇḍits still kept on in the traditional stiffness of their elaborate diction, while a host of new writers, who came into the field with the spread of English education[1] generally adopted the language of the missionaries in a purer and more modified form. The perpetually recurring struggle between the ornate and the plain styles[2], which plays an important part in the history of prose style in almost every literature, was for the first time definitely posed and worked out in Bengali prose in this period—the ornate style being favoured by the Paṇḍits and the plain style chiefly adopted by the Missionary writers. The style of the Paṇḍits found a direct descendant in the Sanskrit College style of the fifties; while the Ālālī style, which betokened a contemporary reactionary movement, found its progenitor, through various intermediaries, primarily in the healthy movement towards simplicity and naturalness, first inaugurated by the Europeans, although secondarily it incorporated various elements from the language of the common people (চলিত ভাষা) and even from the persianised court-language (আদালতী ভাষা). Thus we see that this opposition between the plain and the ornate styles persistently dominated the history of Bengali prose for almost half a century and reached to a crisis in the two antithetical movements of the fifties—indicated by the *Ālālī style* and the *Sanskrit College style*—of which the genius of a writer like Baṅkimchandra could find a proper synthesis.

1 Of whom the most prominent name is that of Kṛṣṇamohan Bandyopādhyāy.

2 See pp. 133, 199-200.

FORMAL IMPORTANCE OF THE PERIOD

It will be seen, therefore, that from the standpoint of literary history, the importance of this period in prose is hardly less than that of any other. But its productions, marked that they are by earliness and immaturity, have far less intrinsic merit. No historian of literature can claim anything like literary competency for much of this early prose, if he judges it by any strict literary standard. Originality is not a distinctive merit of this literature at all. Grammars, school-books, religious tracts and other similar documents, most of them again mere translated pieces, cannot, in their very nature, justly claim to be called literature. In their translations, again, these writers are faithful enough; there is hardly any aspiration to be free and original. Here and there, no doubt, they improved upon the capital that came into their hands, but they seldom *created* or broke loose from their original. The style, again, is of the rudest character, abrupt, disconnected, obscure and full of anacolutha, not only in the works of the Missionaries whose command over the inherent resources of the language must have necessarily been limited and whose repute for erratic style is traditional, but also in the more correct and laboured treatises of the Paṇḍits, who confounded the genius of Bengali with that of Sanskrit. The divergent varieties of expression, again, not only give a comical aspect to the prose of the period but also make it difficult to fix upon a general style. Style, indeed in the strict and rare sense, is hardly to be found in any of these writings; the age of *literary* Bengali had not yet fully dawned, although some of these writings, it must be admitted, are racy from age and agreeable from their very want of precision.

SUMMARY OF ITS ACHIEVEMENTS

When, however, we take an estimate of the sum-total of its achievements, this period of prose never fails to impress us with its importance. Systematic and universal prose-writing is the first thing that it accomplished; and suggestion

of new forms, methods, and materials is the second. There was indeed some amount of religious[1] and philosophical prose-writing before this, but there was, as we have pointed out, no prose-of-all-work, suited to every-day requirements of the people as well as to their literary purposes. Clear, useful and popular prose-writing is a creation of this period, although we have yet to wait for another quarter of a century for the dawn of literary Bengali prose. The use of this prose, again, to address the common people who had been only accessible by verse, is another remarkable achievement of period. It may be well pointed out that though the decay of ancient learning was lamentable in itself, it was yet fortunate in a way for Bengali, for it not only threw men back upon their vernacular but it also stimulated translation and so gave practice in the vernacular, instead of tempting men, as they had been tempted, simply to abstract and compile in the learned classic tongue, and even when they wrote original work, to write it in that obsolete language[2]. That one important limitation, namely, that of translation, which had been imposed upon it, still remained, was no drawback for the time. Indeed, translation is not so entirely an unoriginal thing as it seems or pretends to be, and in certain respects, it is the best exercising ground for an infant prose literature, which had not yet passed even through the lower stages of pupilship. We shall see, indeed, that no really good prose appeared until a long period of apprenticeship in translation had elapsed. Much more importation of vocabulary: much more experiment in term-forging: much more copying of the more accomplished prose-forms of the European languages and classic Sanskrit were necessary before the

1 Esp. on the Sahajiyā form of Baiṣṇabism. See Appendix I.

2 But later on, in the next decade, it brought another temptation, which we have not wholly overcome and which, under the circumstances, would be for some time to come a necessity in itself, of writing in English in order to appeal to a wider public.

resources of style could really be at the command of the prose-writer in miscellaneous subjects.

The field of literary adventures, again, was enlarged to an extent never known before. It is true that this was essentially a period more distinguished for its contributions to what a class of critics would call the "literature of knowledge" rather than to the "literature of power"; yet there is not a single department of useful knowledge which these European writers did not touch. History and Biography, Ethics and Moral Tales, Grammar and Dictionary, Mathematics and Natural Philosophy, Chemistry and Medicine—everywhere we trace the indefatigable activity of the European writers. It is true that most of these works were meant merely to be text-books, but they are equally significant of the zeal of their authors as writers and teachers and of the encouragement which was afforded to the cause of learning. The multiplication of Grammar and Dictionary, no doubt, points to a zealous movement towards scientific study of the language, but it must be admitted that in the lexicons compiled by European writers, undue preponderance is given to Sanskrit words and the proportion of purely native Bengali words is comparatively small; while the Grammars, on the other hand, are written mostly on the pattern of English Grammars and consequently fail to set in relief the peculiar features of the oriental vernacular. Little need be said of the works on History and Biography, Ethics and Moral Tales, for almost all these writings consist of mere translation ; but a peculiar interest attaches, as we have seen, to the Bengali scientific writings of this period for their useful glossaries of technical and difficult terms, as well as for their manner and method of rendering scientific ideas into Bengali. But, besides these contributions to the department of useful knowledge, there came about, under the European influence, a vogue for realism and social satire. The popular opinion has always leant to the supposition that in this sphere *Ālāl* and *Hutam* are the pioneer works; but long before these works were

published, from the time of Carey's *Dialogues* downwards, numerous works (such as Bhabāṇīcharaṇ's *Kalikātā Kamalālaya* or Pramathanāth Śarmā's *Naba Bābu Bilāsa*) were published which served as models for *Ālāl* and *Hutam* and which had indeed reached a high degree of success and popularity. Another important field into which these Europeans directed the energy of Bengali writers is that of journalism. Thanks to the courage and zeal of its promoters, the difficult social and political conditions under which it was started never retarded its growth, and its long and interesting history bears witness to the enormous popularity and usefulness of this organ of popular opinion.

CHAPTER IX

INTERREGNUM IN POETRY FROM 1760

The closing years of the 18th century and the beginning of the 19th form a period of transition from old Bengali to modern Bengali literature; and in this period, as in every period of transition, while access was obtained to new ideas and new methods, the old traditions in literature still lived on. In the light of the Europeanised literature of to-day, prominence must be and has been given to European activity in Bengali Literature of this period, yet from the death of Bhārat-chandra in 1760 to the death of Īśvar Gupta in 1858, flourished a class of Bengali writers, chiefly poets, who were uninfluenced by English ideas and who maintained, even with declining powers, the literary traditions of the past. The tendencies of European or Europeanised writers may, in a sense, be described as exotic; but these inheritors of old literary traditions and instincts, on the other hand, were essentially national in sentiment and expression, and as such represent, apart from all question of intrinsic excellence, a phase of literary development which we cannot very well pass over.

ANTAGONISM BETWEEN TWO OPPOSING TENDENCIES

The literature of the first half of the 19th century is dominate in the main by two distinct tendencies; the one is fostered by European writers or by men tutored in European ideas and marked generally by the spirit of an intellectual aristocracy, while the other derives its strength from the essence of native genius, untouched by foreign ideas, and expresses itself chiefly in various forms of popular literature. The one is composed in prose, while the other is conveyed in the traditionary vehicle of verse. The antagonism between these

two tendencies, though it may not be very marked in later periods, lasts throughout the literary history of the 19th century; and in the literature of to-day, although the triumph of the new tendency is said to be fully proclaimed yet it remains to be considered how far this triumph has been or may be achieved without making legitimate concessions to the demands of the opposing tendency. Till the death of Iśvar Gupta, in whom we find indeed the last, if not the least, valiant champion of the old tendency, the antagonism is definitely posed and consistently worked out. With the death of Iśvar Gupta, we are at the end of the most effective note in the older trend of thought and feeling; and followers of this tendency thereafter, in struggling to maintain their own against the stronger drift of new ideas, were obviously fighting for a lost cause. But, even though the cause was lost, its lessons were not lost; the principles for which it had fought survived and found gradual acceptance. However imperceptible the process had been, it succeeded in tempering the unlicensed Europeanisation of later literature: it afforded a healthy antidote against the unchecked alienation of literature from national sensibilities; it represented a strong counter-current of purely native energy which, if it never forced itself directly to the surface, never at the same time failed to make its subtle and wholesome influence felt. It is a mistake to suppose that the old tendency absolutely died out with the death of Īśvar Gupta. It never died out but it left its enduring vitality in the current of national thought and feeling, unmistakable influence of which may be traced even in the literature of to-day. The spirit of an age or race, yielding to that of its successor, continues to abide in it as an essential ingredient, assumed, transformed and carried forward.

In an historical survey of the 19th century literature, therefore, we cannot mistake the significance of this tendency of literature, which derived its inspiration primarily from conditions of national culture which were not accessible to

European or Europeanised writers of the first half of that century. We must, indeed, give the more prominent place to European writers and those who trod in their footsteps, because it is chiefly through their efforts, aided no doubt by the hand of foreign government, that the dominance of western ideas ultimately strengthened itself and gave a final bent to the form and spirit of modern literature; yet the account of the period would surely be incomplete if we do not take into consideration this stream of purely indigenous activity flowing in the opposite direction and the extent of its influence in moulding the literary characteristics of the age.

ITS HISTORICAL IMPORTANCE

The historical importance, therefore, of this inferior but not insignificant band of writers belonging to the old school lies, mainly as we have seen, in the fact that whatever may be the intrinsic value of their writings they exemplify and hand down in their own way the failing inspiration of earlier days and thus maintain the continuity of literary history during the period of interregnum between the death of Bhāratchandra and the emergence of the new school. Although some of them lived far into the first half of the 19th century they do not reflect the growing literary tendencies of the new era, but they keep up the old manner of thought, the old fashion of imagination and the old form of expression, and thus secure the inheritance of ancient literature for the advantage of the new generation. Standing as they do, on the gateway of modern literature they give little or no presentiment of things to come, they do not announce the future; but they represent the past and stoutly, if unconsciously, make their stand for a fast disappearing form of art and expression which drew its inspiration from the past life of the nation itself and which was not without its significance to the new life the nation was entering upon.

There was a time, however, when the value of these writings was totally forgotten or ignored. They appeared

contemptible in the eyes of the so-called Young Bengal of the last century who had been tutored rigidly in western ideas and western literature to the exclusion of everything national. Īśvar Gupta, in the early fifties, spoke in exuberantly enthusiastic language of the untutored songs of the old Kabis; yet if we are to take Baṅkimchandra as the representative of the next generation, we find his age regarding these compositions with frank disapproval, if not always with superior contempt. In recent years, when we are not altogether obtuse and irresponsive, we have taught ourselves to speak in sober tone and measured language. In literary history, there are, no doubt, extreme vicissitudes of taste whereby idols of past generation crumble suddenly to dust, while new favourites are raised to the old pedestal of glory; yet in spite of such successive waves of aesthetical preference, we must guard against falling into the error of orthodox dogmatism, on the one hand, and the ignorant following of fashion, on the other. Much of this literature, as in the case of some of the songs of the Kabiwālās, is no doubt transient and ephemeral, and there is certainly much in it which is really contemptible; yet the frivolity of an imitative culture or the wild pursuit of ever-shifting literary fashion ought not to blind us to the historical and literary value, whatever it might be, of the art and literature of a generation which has passed away. It is uncritical to regard any particular form of art or mode of utterance as final or absolutely authoritative.

GROUPING OF THIS LITERATURE

We propose in the following pages to take these writers in the old style in the groups mentioned below. It would not be necessary for us to deal with this class of writings in minute detail; it would be enough for our purpose if we indicate broadly the phase of literary development which they represent and give a more or less general survey of their work and achievement. It may be noted here at the

outset that in the case of many of these groups, materials for study are extremely scanty and scattered, and most of the writings which belong to this section have not been yet critically studied or edited. In the case of Pāñchāli, Yātrā and devotional songs, for instance, no attempt has yet been made to collect either data and materials for tracing their systematic history or even to make a satisfactory collection of these floating and fast vanishing forms of literature. Under this condition of imperfect knowledge of the subject no apology is necessary for imperfect treatment, and what is offered here must be taken as nothing more than a merely tentative and preliminary attempt.

(1) Kabiwālās.

(2) Nidhu Bābu and writers of Ṭappā.

(3) Followers of Rāmprasād and writers of devotional songs.

(4) Followers of Bhāratchandra.

(5) Isolated followers of ancient authors: Jaynārāyaṇ Ghoṣāl, Raghunandan Gosvāmī and others.

(6) Authors of Pāñchāli and Yātrā.

(7) Miscellaneous songsters.

CHAPTER X

KABIWĀLĀS

CHRONOLOGY AND CLASSIFICATION OF KABI LITERATURE

The existence of Kabi-songs may be traced to the beginning of the 18th century or even beyond it to the 17th, but the most flourishing period of the Kabiwālās was between 1760 and 1830. Rāsu and Nṛsiṃha were born somewhere between 1734 and 1738; Haru Ṭhākur in 1738; Nitāi Bairāgī in 1751; so that between 1760 and 1780, they had all reached the height of their reputation as songsters and made this form of literary amusement popular throughout the country. During the continuance of the dual government, therefore, between 1765 and 1775, and in the period of literary interregnum which followed upon the death of Bhāratchandra, they were the most considerable pretenders in the literary field; and if the mantle of the old authors did not exactly suit their narrow shoulders, they attempted in the main to echo the sentiment and ideas of old-world poetry. Most of these greater Kabiwālās lived into the period of British rule. Rāsu and Nṛsiṃha died between 1805 and 1807; but Haru Ṭhākur lived up to 1812 and Nitāi even beyond that to 1821. Rām Basu, though in a sense considerably junior to these earlier poets, having been born in 1786, died early in 1828. After these greater Kabiwālās, came their followers, disciples and imitators who maintained the tradition of Kabi-poetry up to the fifties or beyond it. The Kabi-poetry, therefore, covers roughly the long stretch of a century from 1760 to 1860, although after 1830 all the greater Kabiwālās one by one had passed away and Kabi-poetry had rapidly declined in the hands of their less gifted followers. We shall have, therefore, to distinguish three different periods of Kabi-

literature—(1) Before 1760. (2) Between 1760 and 1830. (3) After 1830.

The Kabi-poetry, however, has been subjected to an amount of harsh and even contemptuous criticism which it hardly ever deserved. The Reforming Young Bengal of the forties considered all forms of popular amusements—Kabi, Yātrā or Pāṃchāli—to be contemptible. We shall see that there had gradually come into Kabi-songs elements which were really contemptible; but what strikes one in the study of these popular forms of literature is that throughout the 19th century, with the exception of Īśvar Gupta and a few isolated appreciators of things ancient, the so-called educated men of that century hardly ever cared to make a sympathetic study, much less to realise their literary or historical importance. Even to-day they do not seem to have received their due amount of attention or appreciation. But inspite of the apparent uncertainty of critical determination, the historical importance of these songs, apart from all question of artistic valuation, cannot surely be denied. The old Kabi-literature does not require an apologist to-day but it stands upon its own inherent claim to be treated in an historical survey of Bengali literature of this century.

MATERIALS AND MEANS OF STUDY

But the materials and means for a critical study of this literature are extremely scanty; and at the same time it is doubtful whether even much of it can bear very well a thorough critical examination. At present we find scattered about only a few fragments which may convey a knowledge of this literature but which are insufficient to familiarise us with it so as to enable us either to appreciate its beauty, construct its history or determine its value. Information about the lives of these Kabiwālās or with regard to the general history of Kabi-poetry is extremely scanty; what remains consists of a few traditional stories, often useless and ill-authenticated.

WHY THIS LITERATURE WAS NOT PRESERVED

When we consider the peculiar conditions under which most of these songs were composed and the mode in which they were transmitted we can, to some extent, understand why a very small and fragmentary part of this literature has come down to us. These Kabis were not, properly speaking, leisured and accomplished men of letters, cultivating literature for its own sake, and their productions were not deliberate literary compositions meant for a critical audience. Their very name *Dāṃḍā Kabi* (দাঁড়াকবি)[1] indicates perhaps the peculiar way in which they extemporised their songs, standing like a rhapsodist before a motley assembly, although it is difficult to say from what time exactly this appellation was first applied to them. The evil days of the latter half of the 18th century, we have seen, necessitated the growth of a class of "poets" whose calling had now become an irregular profession and a regular means of livelihood. We have consequently a body of literature which was marked by carelessness rather than by scrupulousness and which belonged to that class of writings conveniently termed ephemeral journalism. The authors had no higher ambition than that of immediately pleasing their patrons and gaining their cheap praise and pay. They never cared to reach that mark of excellence which would make posterity pause before it would willingly let their productions perish. These songs, again, had generally circulated in the mouths of the people ; in course of time, while some were forgotten, others got curiously mixed up or passed through strange transformation until, as in their present extant form, they can hardly be called the genuine ori-

1 It seems that this epithet is very old. According to one version the epithet *Dāṃḍā Kabi* was applied to distinguish Kabi from Hāp-ākhḍāi, which was a hybird species, formed out of Kabi and ākhḍāi, and which was therefore a kind of *basā-kabi* (Preface to *Manomohan Gītābalī*, written by Manomohan Basu himself). But see *Janma-bhūmi*, vii, p. 58.

ginal works of their creators, or with confidence be referred to this or that individual author. No critical appreciation or discrimination was expected and none was made. The literature was forgotten no sooner than a generation had passed away.

Even in 1824, Īśvar Gupta lamented that most of these songs had already vanished in his time or had been fast vanishing, and his self-imposed task of collecting these old songs had been rendered difficult by the fact that he had to depend entirely upon the uncertain and fleeting memory of old men who had been, day by day, dropping away. Except Nidhu Bābu among the earlier group—and Nidhu Bābu, though a patron of Ākhḍāi, can hardly be classed as a Kabiwālā—none of these poets or their followers ever cared to reduce their songs to writing. Printing was hardly known in those days and, if known, was too expensive and difficult of access to these needy songsters ; yet men like Haru Ṭhākur had rich patrons like Rājā Naba Kṛṣṇa to whom it had never occurred that these floating songs were worth preserving. The change of taste and fashion in the next generation and the contempt with which all earlier writing had come to be regarded could hardly favour the idea of preserving or collecting this literature in any form. It is not surprising, therefore, that no attempt at a collection and preservation of these songs had been made till 1854 when Īśvar Gupta, whose poetic sympathies allied him with Kabiwālās and who himself was no mean composer of Kabi-song, first collected and published some to these half-forgotten songs in the pages of his *Saṃbād-prabhākar*. It is chiefly through his devoted labours, seconded by the efforts of a few other later collectors, that we possess what remains of this Kabi-literature ; for although several inferior anthologies have been made since then, most of these, with or without acknowledgment, draw liberally from the rich fund which he had supplied half a century ago and little substantial addition has been made to our knowledge ever since.

ORIGIN AND GROWTH OF KABI-POETRY

It is very difficult, in the absence of materials, to trace the origin of this peculiar form of literature, hardly at all literary, which expressed itself in songs but which was chiefly meant for popular amusement. Most of the songs which have come down to us belong to a date posterior to the middle of the 18th century; in tracing, therefore, the form and spirit of this literature, as it existed earlier than this date, we are to be guided chiefly by conjecture derived from the study of the later fragments which have been preserved, as well as by an examination of the general drift of the literature itself. It must be noted, however, that song-literature is not a novel thing in Bengali; for it had formed a part of the social and religious life of the people, and religious festivities, enlivened by singing, were celebrated with a gaiety which had its mundane side. Even with the decline of Baiṣṇabism, which had brought in its wake a glorious time of sweet singing, and with the revival of Śākta and other forms of literature in the 18th century, the tradition of song-making had never been extinct. The Baiṣṇabs, by their peripatetic singing, had broadcast songs leavening, as they did, the popular mind; and although times and circumstances had changed, the perennial love of song, which marks Bengali literature throughout its history, always survived. The political troubles of the 18th century and the social changes consequent thereupon naturally precluded any serene exercise of serious literature except perhaps in remote villages or in the comparatively secure and luxurious courts of noble patrons; but the popular craving was satisfied, on the one hand, by Yātrā, Pāṃchāli, and other cognate forms of popular literature in which also there was always an exclusive preponderance of the song-element, and by the devotional songs like those of Rāmprasād and his followers, on the other. It was about this time that the Kabiwālās had come into prominence. The time was not for thought: it wanted song and amusement; the Kabiwālās who could give them had soon become popular.

VARIOUS TYPES OF POPULAR ENTERTAINMENT

The Kabi-poetry, as it has come down to us, related chiefly to four topics, namely, Mālasī (songs on Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa and other deities), Sakhī-saṃbād, Biraha and Kheuḍ-lahar. There was no systematic subject-matter or story. The Ākhḍāi was বৈঠকী গান or songs meant for the drawing room. It was made current, if not created, under the patronage of Rājā Naba-kṛṣṇa of Sobhabazar (Calcutta), by Kului Chandra Sen and Rāmanidhi Gupta. It had no systematic narrative but consisted of Mālasī (songs on Bhavanī , ভবানী বিষয়ক), then Kheuḍ (erotic songs), and lastly Prabhātī. Mohan Chānd Basu is said to have learnt it from Rāmnidhi ; and later he expanded it, with elements derived from Kabi-song, into Hāp-(half) ākhḍai. Its chief theme was Sakhī-saṃbād, which was absent in Ākhḍāi. In the Tarjā, as in the Jhumur (with dancing) which was mainly erotic and sometimes indecent, there was free verbal fight in song between two parties (উভোর কাটাকাটি). There was dance and music in all these types of entertainment. In the Pāṃchāli, which we shall deal with presently, the song-element did not predominate ; it had a story or theme to expand.

CAUSE OF ITS DEBASEMENT

The days of royal or other forms of patronage of these entertainments had been fast vanishing. The poets, fallen on evil days, had to depend more and more upon the favour of the capricious and half-educated public who now became their chief patrons. The ruin of old zemindars and princely houses, begun in the latter days of the Muhammedan rule and completed in the earlier days of British supremacy, had brought into existence, as we have seen, a class of upstart landlords and speculators who stepped into their place but who could not be expected to possess the same inherited tradition of culture and refinement as marked the ancient aristocracy of the land. The commercial banians, śeṭhs, and merchants, on the other hand, in the new flourishing cities,

now growing into importance, constituted themselves a class of patrons who demanded literature, not of a fine stuff, but that which could afford them momentary excitement of pleasure in the intervals of engrossing business. The new public had neither the leisure nor the capacity nor the willingness to study or appreciate any reproduction of the finer shades and graces of earlier poetry. This was the audience[1] for whom, in the main, the Kabiwālās sang their songs, and it is no wonder that the tone and temper of the literature they produced was debased through this unholy contact. This debasement was complete in the next generation when with the spread of western education and consequent revolution in taste, these songs had been banished totally from 'respectable' society and descended to the lower classes who demanded a literature suited to their uneducated taste. This was the beginning of *Kheuḍ* (খেউড়)[2] und *Hāp-ākhḍāi* (হাপ-আখড়াই) in Kabi-literature. In the earlier days Kabi-songs had been composed and sung in great ceremonies and festivals, and the subjects of these songs generally consisted of religious themes; in the later days, even in the days of Nitāi Bairāgī, Īśvar Gupta tells us ; "বিশিষ্ট জনেরা ভদ্রগানে এবং ইতর জনেরা খেউড় গানে তুষ্ট হইত" ; and an illustrative anecdote is related, with reference to Nitāi, which runs thus[3]: এমত জনরব যে

1 The suggestion (Dinesh Chandra Sen, *History*, p. 697) that the low caste of the songsters shows that the institution was essentially for the amusement of the illiterate rustics who formed its chief audience, is hardly borne out by facts. This form of entertainment obtained specially in urban centres like Chandannagar, Chinsurah and Calcutta and most of the Kabiwālās were not rural rustics but men bred up in the cities. Rām Basu, Haru Ṭhākur, Nitāi Bairāgī and indeed the whole host of them lived in Calcutta or in the neighbouring cities. Kabi-poetry itself, if not completely urban, is however devoid of all stamps of rusticity.

2 According to Bhāratchandra, the Kheuḍ was imported from Nadiā-Śāntipur (নদে-শান্তিপুর হতে খেঁড়ু আনাইব। নূতন নূতন ঠাটে খেঁড়ু শুনাইব).

3 *Saṃbād Prabhākar*, Agrahāyaṇ 1, 1261, p. 6.

বসন্তকালে কোন এক রজনীতে কোন স্থানে ইনি সখীসংবাদ ও বিরহ গাহিয়া আসর অত্যন্ত জমাট্ করিয়াছেন, তাবৎ ভদ্রেই মুগ্ধ হইয়া শুনিতেছেন ও পুনঃ পুনঃ বিরহ গাহিতেই অনুরোধ করিতেছেন, তাহার ভাবার্থ গ্রহণে অক্ষম হইয়া ছোটোলোকেরা আসরে দাঁড়াইয়া চিৎকার পূর্ব্বক কহিল 'হ্যাদে্ দেখ্ লেতাই, ফ্যার্ ঝদি কালকুকিলির গান ধল্লি, তো, দো, দেলাম, খাড় গা,' নিতাই তচ্ছ্রবণে তৎক্ষণাৎ মোটাভজনের খেউড় ধরিয়া তাহারদিগের অস্থির চিত্তকে সুস্থির করিলেন।

DEGENERATION OF KABI-POETRY IN THEME, STYLE AND DICTION

Not only in taste, but also in theme, style and diction, Kabi-songs degenerated. The later group of poems from this point of view affords an interesting contrast to the works of the earlier period. We shall have occasion to speak of this matter in detail, but it may be noted here at the outset that a wide divergence in method, manner and inspiration exists between the earlier and the later groups of Kabi-poetry. The earlier Kabi-songs were not, as generally supposed, wholly unpremeditated and wanting in all sense of artistic arrangement or unity of structure; on the contrary, they were all composed, as we shall see, with due deference, as in the case of the sonnet, to definite rules of line-arrangement, general structure and rhyme-ending. In later times, with the introduction of lively Hāp-ākhḍāi and Kheuḍ, the more studied structure of earlier songs were replaced by a mode of utterance, off-hand but effective in its unexpectedness and vigorous valgarity, defiant of all laws and lost to every sense of artistic composition. We hear of the existence of disputants or two opposing 'parties' who took up different aspects of a particular theme and replied to each other in songs, even from the very earliest time when this form of amusement had sprung into existence; and it was probably these passados in the bout of poetical dialectics which had lent in the popular mind a piquancy and zest to these songs and had thus made

them preferable perhaps to Yātrā and Pāṃchāli which did not include such 'wit-combats' in their scope. But in the earlier period, a consultation used to be held between the parties and the themes and 'replies' were made ready before they were sung. It was Rām Basu, a later Kabiwālā, who first introduced the innovation of extempore and free verbal fight between the parties.[1] From his time, these 'flytings' of the Kabiwālās had become, in the proper sense, unpremeditated; and as such, they had come to possess all the qualities and defects of unpremeditated composition. The unexpected turns of phrases, the clash of witticism, the pungent raciness of colloquial vulgarity were no doubt pleasing to the mob; but what is good rhetoric for the groundlings is bad for literature. We can never expect any literary finish or artistic grace in compositions which the necessity of quick and witty reply had brought into existence and which were meant to be more racy and effective than anything else. Coarseness, scurrility and colloquialism, unredeemed by any sense of artistic expression, began to increase in volume and ultimately Kabi-songs subsided into vulgar and abusive verbiage.

BETTER QUALITY OF EARLIER KABI-POETRY

It is not surprising, therefore, to find that to many a modern reader, Kabi-literature connotes little more than Kheuḍ and bad taste; but it must not be forgotten that in its inception, it drew its inspiration from a purer source. The sincere religiousness of the earlier Kabi-songs is unmistakable and inspite of later importation and popularity of subjects like Biraha or Sakhī-saṃbād,[2] religion still continued to supply

1 *Prāchīn Kabi-saṃgraha*, ed. Gopal Chandra Mukhopadhyay, B.S. 1284, Introduction, p. ii.

2 Sakhī-saṃbād was not secular in theme but in spirit. It included such things as *Prabhātī* or *Bhor-gān* (Awakening of Rādhā or Kṛṣṇa in the morning or Rādhā's morning appearance as a *khaṇḍitā*), *Goṣṭha*, (in which figure Yośodā, the boy Kṛṣṇa and his boy-companions), *māthur* (where Kubjā and Bṛndā generally come in), besides *Uddhaba-saṃbād*, *Prabhās* etc.

the essential ingredient. Although there are many things which at once mark them off from the Baiṣṇab poets, the earlier Kabiwālās were, in more than one sense, nearly allied to their great predecessors. When Baiṣṇabism and its romantic literature had subsided lower and lower into a kind of decrepitude in the 18th century and a militant Śākta literature of a more or less classical type had grown up, the Kabiwālās, in however groping fashion, tried to keep up the older tradition and sang generally of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa.[1] The classical form of art which had taken shape in the 18th century and culminated in the writings of Bhāratchandra was the result as well as the cause of the rapid decline of Baiṣṇabism and its literature in that period; and the 18th century literature is marked throughout by an entire absence of the literary influence of the lyric and romantic songs of Baiṣṇab poets. The literary practice of the 18th century is a natural reaction and going back to conventional standards of verse-making, with a more or less decided leaning towards the ornate and the erudite. Rhetoric rather than truth, fancy rather than imagination, intellect rather than feeling—this becomes the more mundane means of poetry, in which we miss the passionate idealism or the lyric mysticism of earlier Baiṣṇab poetry. The Kabiwālās, no doubt, were carried away more or less by this general literary drift of the period; but it was the Kabiwālās alone who had kept up the tradition of Baiṣṇab poetry in this age of a militant literary tendency.

RELATION TO BAIṢṆAB POETRY

That Kabi-literature, in some way or other, is connected with Baiṣṇab literature and that the Kabiwālās, were, if not the lineal descendants, at least distantly related to the great Baiṣṇab poets, is shown to some extent by the fact that the best part of earlier Kabi-songs relates to the eternal Baiṣṇab

1 Although songs on other deities (especially Bhabānī) were not excluded.

theme--the love of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa with all its attendant intricacies of *mān, māthur, biraha, goṣṭha* and other themes. The Kabiwālās, it is true, have not got much of the accumulated virtue of Baiṣṇab verse and phrase as well as its deep note of passion and fulness of romantic colour; yet it is remarkable that they still make use of the imagery and the hackneyed generalities of Baiṣṇab writings, and generally echo the sentiments and ideas which had become established in literary usage since the time of the Baiṣṇab poets. It is true that the Kabiwālās never possessed the genius and devotional fervour of the old Baiṣṇab poets, that none of the Kabi-songs reaches that standard of literary excellence which has made Baiṣṇab poetry so resplendent, and that the Kabiwālās, in course of time, admitted more mundane subjects and themes and allowed themselves infinite looseness of speech and style: yet when we come across lines like the following sung by Nitāi Bairāgī:

শ্যামের বাঁশী বাজে বুঝি বিপিনে।
বঁধুর বাঁশী বাজে বুঝি বিপিনে ॥
নহে কেন অঙ্গ অবশো হইলো,
সুধা বরিষিলো শ্রবণে ॥

we are at once reminded of many a line from the Baiṣṇab poets, although it is quite probable that it is not a question of direct imitation or assimilation and that none of the Kabiwālās had any straight access to any of these older poets. The Kabiwālās were not, as we have said, a leisured class of studious poets; they probably never had any opportunity to directly utilising the wealth of older poetry; yet whatever might have been the source through which the tendency had filtered down, they echo primarily in their songs the sentiment and taste of a bygone age; and through this inherited tendency and probably through indirect, if not direct, literary filiation, they trace their ultimate ancestry to the ancient Baiṣṇab poets.[1]

1 The theory, put forward by Dineschandra Sen *(History*, p. 697) that Kabi-songs originally constituted parts of old Yātrās, the simple

THE SPIRIT OF BAIṢṆAB POETRY IMPERFECTLY COMMUNICATED TO KABI-POETRY

It is not our purpose here to enter into details, but any student of ancient Bengali literature is well aware that Baiṣṇab poetry cannot be very strictly described as simple and unsophisticated. Although it can to-day be enjoyed as pure poetry or as the expression of fervent religious longings in the language of human passion, it can never be regarded as the spontaneous product of an uncritical and ingenuous faith. This religious-amatory poetry presupposed a psychology and a metaphysic which had been reduced to an elaborate system and which possessed a peculiar phraseology and a set of conceits of its own. The romantic commonplaces of Baiṣṇab poetry, familiar to any reader not only through its poetry but also through elaborate rhetorical treatises like *Ujjvala-nīlamaṇi* or elaborate semi-metaphysical works like *Ṣaṭ-saṃdarbha* or *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu*, are in a sense factitious, professional and sectarian, if not doctrinaire or didactic. Many of the famous Baiṣṇab poets, no doubt, got out of their conventional material the kind of effect which appeals to us most strongly, and there is the sheer force of poetic inspiration in many of them which lifts their poetry into the highest level of artistic utterance; yet all the flood of their lyric and romantic idealism cannot altogether cover their psychological formalism, their rhetoric of ornament and conceits, their pedantry of metaphysical sentimentalism. The endless diversity of amorous condition grouped con-

operatic episodes of which were separately worked up into this special species, is hardly convincing ; for in the first place, there are no data to support this suggestion ; secondly, the two kinds had essentially different characteristics ; and thirdly, the one is not due to the break-up of the other, as both existed simultaneously throughout the course of their literary history. The other theory (*Janma-bhūmi*, vii, p. 58) that Kabi was originally a part of Pāṃchāli is more or less open to similar objections. The exact significance of the term Pāṃchāli itself is uncertain ; what character it possessed in earlier times is not definitely known.

veniently under *mān, māthur, biraha, pūrba-rāg, milan* and the like, is treated, no doubt, with emotional directness, but it subsides into agreeable formulas and dogmatic shibboleths.

Leaving aside individual independence of trait so marked in poets like Bidyāpati, Chaṇḍīdās or Jñānadās, when we come to the legion of lesser lights we find that, although these minor poets share more or less in the general poetic spirit pervading the age, there 'is yet a monotonous sameness of characteristics, inevitably suggesting a sense of artificiality. In spite of its romantic charm and lyric affluence, the themes and subjects of this poetry lacked variety and exuberance of inventive thought. We meet over and over again with the same tricks of expression, the same strings of nouns and adjectives, the same set of situations, the same group of conceits and the same system of emotional analysis. In the greater poets, the sentiment is refined and the expression sufficiently varied; in the lesser poets, they degenerate into rigid artistic conventionalities. When the Kabiwālās came to inherit the spiritual estate of their poetical ancestors, Baiṣṇab poetry had been reduced almost to a mechanic art; its conceptions had become stereotyped and its language conventional. But its faith, its religious enthusiasm had by that time filtered down through all the crudities of its surrounding into a simple, unquestioned and habitual form of religiosity. Its spiritual essence alone survived; its commonplaces and conceits, its pedantry and formalism had lost much of their force and had become effete conventionalities.

KABI-POETRY NOT FACTITIOUS NOR SECTARIAN

Although Kabi-poetry, in its theme and diction, is generally conventional and mechanically reproductive, yet it concerns itself chiefly with the essential significance of Baiṣṇab poetry, its devotional fervour, its emotional appeal and not directly with its metaphysical or psychological banalities. It is the habitual and unreflecting faith of the people, unaffected by any scholastic or sectarian prepossess-

ions, that supplied the chief ingredient of Kabi-poetry. In this sense, Kabi-literature is neither scholastic nor cultured, nor is it factitious and professional. None of the Kabiwālās was literate enough to enter into the intricacies of emotional or metaphysical subtlety, nor had they any sectarian tradition behind to implant in them anything other than its simple spiritual significance which had percolated and spread down even to the masses. They had taken Baiṣṇabism *en masse* and not in its details, in its essence and not in its accidents, though they tacitly accepted and mechanically repeated its conceits and its imagery, its time-honoured dogmas and doctrines.

KABI-POETRY ESSENTIALLY A FORM OF POPULAR AMUSEMENT

It would be unjust to institute a comparison between the Baiṣṇab lyrics and the songs of the Kabiwālās ; but it must be noted that the latter in many cases debased and vulgarised, while they borrowed, the ideas and conceptions of Baiṣṇab poetry. One particular section of Baiṣṇab poetry, remarkable for its passion and its poetic quality, which is generally grouped under the heading of *Prema-baichitta* (প্রেমবৈচিত্ত) is practically non-existent in Kabi-literature. Unable to enter into its subtlety, its romantic fervour and its mystic spirituality, the Kabiwālās could not speak in the same rapturous accents nor with the same nobility of sentiment. It is true that both these species of literature were never intended originally to be literature at all ; they never consisted of deliberate literary creation by self-conscious artists. Religious enthusiasm, on the one hand, and popular amusement, on the other, supplied the motive of its making in each case ; and in so far as each species adhered to this original motive, each assumed its distinctive character. The peculiar conditions under which it was produced modified the form and tendency of the production of each kind. But while under the stress of a new-born religious fervour and its lyric and mystic

idealism, the creations of Baiṣṇab poets were often lifted into the region of pure poetry, the more mundane object and secular interest of the Kabiwālās dragged them down to a dead level of uninspired commonplace. It is, indeed, very doubtful whether a great deal of Kabi-poetry can, with the utmost allowance, be regarded as strictly literary, so deeply had the peculiar condition of its making affected the character of its production. Kabi-poetry must be primarily regarded as a form of popular amusement affording, no doubt, an interesting field of study to the student of social history but hardly to be considered by the historian of literature except in so far as it rises to the level of literature.

NOT STRICTLY FOLK-LITERATURE OR POPULAR POETRY

Although essentially a popular form of amusement, composed chiefly by popular poets and transmitted through oral tradition, yet it must be noted that Kabi-songs hardly bear any resemblance to what may be strictly called folk-literature or popular poetry. It would be a mistake to compare them, for instance, to the mediaeval European ballads either in form or spirit. The Kabi-literature, no doubt, possesses the same dramatic or mimetic qualities and choral peculiarities; but they lack the condition of communal composition which is essential to balladry, and the poetical content is not, as in balladry, narrative nor is it submitted to an epic process of transmission. It is not simple, anonymous and objective in the sense in which the mediaeval European ballads were, but it bears all the marks of individual authorship and all the conventionalities of a literary tradition ; it has never shown, in its growth and development, any tendency towards the romance, the story or the chronicle so as to take it out of its original dramatic and choral structure. The songs of the illiterate Kabiwālās, no doubt, enter into a vital rapport with the people who compose the nation, the people who are far more puissant and important

in national history than the so-called cultivated minority. At the same time, if they constitute popular poetry at all, they represent only a very narrow type of that species: for the true function of popular poetry is the interpretation of the people to themselves and the creation of a popular ideal, which function these songs discharge only partially ; while the forms and expressions of this literature are much less the property of the race than of the individual. These poets were, no doubt, born among the people,[1] lived with the people and understood perfectly their ways of thinking and feeling ; hence their direct hold upon the masses of whom many a modern writer is contentedly ignorant. But these poems, meant for popular entertainment and bearing a close contact with the people, hardly ever speak of the people themselves and possess little or no democratic sympathy or exaltation. They are thoroughly preoccupied with the conventional themes of earlier poets, though their treatment may be a little popular; and they even express themselves in conventional diction and imagery. They have got a literary tradition behind them, the banalities of which they cannot always transcend and overstep into true democratic poetry.

A PHASE OF DECADENCE OF EARLIER LITERARY TRADITION

But this literary tradition they had modified in their own way, particularly through circumstances and conditions under which they composed and over which they had no control, and partly through an inherent lack of a thorough grasp upon the realities of old poetry. The themes which they handled had possessed, in the hands of older poets, qualities capable

1 Kabi-poetry counted its votary amongst the lowest classes. Except Haru Ṭhākur, Rāsu and Nṛsiṃha, Rām Basu and a few others, the Kabiwālās belonged to the lowest social grades of a *muchi* (shoemaker), a *mayarā* (sweetmeat-vendor), a *chhutar* (carpenter), a *feriṅgi* (half-bred Eurasian), a *svarṇakār* (goldsmith), a *tāṃti* (weaver), etc. In this catholicity it resembles earlier Baiṣṇabism itself.

of evoking a great art ; but the less exalted treatment of the Kabiwālās could hardly work them up into new shapes of beauty with sufficient power and subtlety. It was their misfortune to represent an essentially decadent art. In these metrical exercises of the Kabiwālās we see not the adult manhood of old literature but its senile decrepitude. The poetry is reminiscent rather than spontaneous: it is reproductive and imitative rather than, in the true sense, creative. Most of the songs which the Kabiwālās extemporised were unsought and unpremeditated; yet in their homage to old-world conventions in style, theme, and literary treatment, they belonged to a decaying dynasty the prestige of which, in spite of their belated efforts, had been fast vanishing.

SPIRIT OF EARLIER POETRY INADEQUATELY REPRESENTED

But even in their imitativeness, they could not always reproduce the fine shades and graces of old poetry, its weight, its elevation and its profundity. There are many things, no doubt, in Baiṣṇab *padābalīs* which are not in any sense commendable, but in their places and as a part of the whole they may pass off without much incongruity. But in the songs of the Kabiwālās these things, severed from their true relations and from their natural surroundings of beauty, assumed an incongruous independence and a distorted shape, incompatible with artistic or spiritual excellence, especially as it is often dressed in weak phraseology and loose versification. The Baiṣṇab poetry unfolds before our vision such an extensive realm of beauty that its occasional deformities and blemishes are easily passed over, nor do they appear in their natural state artistically inconsistent. Apart from all questions of spiritual interpretation, the ideal of love depicted in Baiṣṇab poetry may have, from a layman's stand-point, departed in places from the strictness of propriety or decorum, but if after a study of the poetry in its entirety, a man

does not rise with an impression of its beauty and nobility, then the conclusion is obvious that either he has not read it properly or that he is impervious to all sense of poetic excellence.

KABIWĀLĀ'S TREATMENT OF RĀDHĀ AND KṚṢṆA CITED AS ILLUSTRATION

In the infinite varieties of amorous situation, the description of Rādhā as a *khaṇḍitā* heroine or of Kṛṣṇa as an arch-deceiver may have, leaving aside other explanations, an artistic justification of enhancing the beauty of this poetry by adding to it an element of playful toying (*chalanā*) or wayward vagary (*bañchanā*) or even a sterner element of distressing poignancy; yet whatever may be the interpretation, it certainly does not dwarf our conception of the finer spirit of Baiṣṇab poetry. Ignoring the considerations of sensual presentation or spiritual explanation, the central and essential idea of Baiṣṇab poetry, embodied in the conception of Rādhā's *kalaṅka*, has an emotional suggestion of its own, which adds an element of intensity and earnestness to the love of Rādhā as the type of a heroine who foregoes all for love. In the poetry of the Kabiwālās these elements severed from their natural context and regarded by themselves assume the somewhat repellent intensity of impertinent interest. Having realised full well that the depth and beauty of Baiṣṇab poetry were beyond themselves or their audience, they had selected and isolated for representation only those portions of it which would appeal more directly by their effective but transient vulgarity. The Kabiwālās therefore give, consciously or unconsciously, more prominence to *kalaṅka* and *chhalanā* over anything else of Baiṣṇab love-poetry, and these elements in their incongruous context are often presented with such unadorned boldness and repulsive relief and with such ill-suited lightness of touch that they become in the end thoroughly inartistic. Kṛṣṇa's wantonness is carried to a frivolously forbidding extent and Rādhā's

sense of the affront, thus dealt out by the unfaithful lover, is marked by a singular lack of self-respect and sense of dignity. The process is the process of dethroning a god for the purpose of humanising a scoundrel.

Rādhā and her companions are eternally complaining, with all the silliness of plaintive sentimentality, of the endless amours of the ever deceitful lover; but after all, she takes them very lightly and no great persuasion is necessary to reconcile her in the end to her lover. She laments, she weeps, but her laments are hollow and her tears are idle. The apologist may contend that all these are mere forms of divine sportiveness (খেলা, ছল or লীলা) and that we must not judge them by secular standards. But we must guard against bringing in spiritual considerations in extenuation of artistic inadequacy, although we cannot, it is true, altogether steer ourselves clear of the question of spiritual interpretation. There is no doubt the dictum of the author of *Ujjvala-nīlamaṇi*[1] that what is true of Śrīkṛṣṇa is not true of the ordinary lover: but even Rūpa Gosvāmī himself admits that Kṛṣṇa is conceived as the ideal lover, *naṭa-chūdāmaṇi*[2] or *rasika-śekhara*.[3] It is not our purpose here to enter into any discussion of the inner significance of Baiṣṇab poetry or its metaphysical conceptions; what is intended here to be stated is that from the layman's standpoint of artistic criticism, the *abhimān* of Rādhā, as we often find it in the songs of the Kabiwālās, has got hardly any reality in it, nor has the love of Kṛṣṇa any deep-rooted strength of feeling which alone would have lifted it into the highest sphere of poetry. So long as the heroine realises that she possesses a strong hold upon her lover's love, the interruption of its smooth course through occasional sportiveness or incidental vagary adds a peculiar

1 *Ujjvala-nīlamaṇi*, i. 18-21 (Nirnaya Sagar Ed., pp. 11-24).

2 *Ibid., loc. cit.*

3 Kṛṣṇadās Kabirāj's commentary on *Śrīkṛṣṇa-karṇāmṛta* on śl. 1, 11 etc. This epithet is common enough in Baiṣṇab works.

charm to the elements of *abhimān*; but when the offence is great and involves faithlessness and disgrace which strikes at the very root of the passion itself, the heroine dishonours herself when she takes it lightly or sits down to villifying, complaining or indulging in a sentimental process of elaborate *abhimān*. Such things hardly possess any appeal artistic or otherwise, and as such should hardly find a place in nobler types of poetry.

One or two illustrations will make out the point we are trying to indicate. Here is a song of Rām Basu in which Rādhā is speaking as a *khaṇḍitā* heroine:[1]

সাধ করে করেছিলাম দুর্জ্জয় মান,
 শ্যামের তায় হল অপমান।
শ্যামকে সাধলেম না ফিরে চাইলেম না
 কথা কইলেম না রেখে মান ॥
কৃষ্ণ সেই রাগের অনুরাগে, রাগে রাগে গো,
 পড়ে পাছে চন্দ্রাবলীর নবরাগে।
ছিল পূর্ব্বের যে পূর্ব্বরাগ, আবার একি অপূর্ব্বরাগ,
 পাছে রাগে শ্যাম রাধার আদর ভুলে যায় ॥
শ্যাম কাল মান করে গেছে, কেমন আছে, দূতি, জেনে আয়।
 করে আমারে বঞ্চিতে, গেল কার কুঞ্জে বঞ্চিতে,
হয়ে খণ্ডিতে মরি হরির প্রেমের দায়।
 ছলে বুঝি মন ছলে গেছে শ্যামরায় ॥
আগে বুঝিবে মন দূরে থেকে চখে দেখে গো,
 কয় কিনা কয় কথা ডেকে।
যদি কাতরে কথা কয়, তবে নয় অপ্রণয়,
 অমনি সেধ গো ধরে দুটি রাঙ্গা পায় ॥

1 *Saṃbād-prabhākar*, Āśvin, 1261, p. 4: *Prāchīn Kabi-saṃgraha*, pp. 31-32; *Gupta-ratnoddhār*, pp. 104-106; *Saṃgīt-sāra-saṃgraha*, vol. ii, pp. 1001-1002.

যার মানের মানে আমায় মানে, সে না মানে,
তবে কি কোরবে এ মানে।
মাধবের কত মান, না হয় তার পরিমাণ,
মানিনী হয়েছি যার মানে ॥
যে পক্ষে যখন বাড়ে অভিমান,
সেই পক্ষে রাখতে হয় সম্মান।
রাখতে শ্যামের মান, গেল গেল মান,
আমার কিসের মান অপমান ॥

And then consider how the companions of Rādhā, in a tone bantering but shamelessly humiliating to themselves, are entreating the shame-faced false lover now seated comfortably in Mathurā:

কও কথা বদন তোল, হও সদয় এই ভিক্ষা চাই।
রাধার অধৈর্য্যে এলাম আপার্য্যে,
তোমার কংসরাজ্যের অংশ লতে আসি নাই।
অধোমুখে যদি থাক শ্যাম কুবুজার দোহাই ॥
তোমার সহাস্য বদনে নাই রহস্য,
কেন মাধব আজ দাসীর প্রতি ঔদাস্য,
চারু চন্দ্রাস্য নহে প্রকাশ্য, যেন সর্ব্বস্ব লতে এলেম ভাবছ তাই ॥[1]

And here is a piece of undisguised raillery by Kubjā the new mistress:

কুবুজা কহিছে তুমি রাজা এই মধুভুবনে।
রাজার উপরে রাজা আছে আগে জানিনে ॥
ওহে গোবিন্দ বড় সন্দ হতেছে,
করেছ প্রেমধার তুমি কোন্ রমণীর কাছে।
তুমি করে কার দাসত্ব, পেয়েছ রাজত্ব,
সে তত্ত্ব জানতে এসেছে তোমার ॥

1 *Prāchīn Kabi-saṃgraha*, p. 35.

আছে খৎ নে পথে বসে, কে রমণী সে,
শ্যাম কি ধার কিছু তার।
হয়ে আমাদের ভূপতি, ওহে যদুপতি,
কোটালী করেছিলে কোন রাজার ॥
খতে লেখা আছে, ও শ্রীহরি,
খাতক ত্রিভঙ্গ শ্যাম, মহাজন ব্রজকিশোরী ॥
মনে আতঙ্ক করি ওই, ত্রিভঙ্গ শুন কই,
তোমা বই চেরা সই আর হবে কার ॥ (রামবসু)[1]

And lastly listen to the ingenious but hardly authentic justification of the false lover by himself:[2]

আমি কাহার কেনা নই, ভক্তাধীন রসময়ী,
ভক্তপ্রেমডোরে বাঁধা মন।
ছিল রাবণের সহোদরা এই কুবুজা কল্পান্তরে সই।
কল্লে বাসনা পেতে আমায়, দিয়েছিলাম বর তায়,
হয়ে কৃষ্ণরূপ জুড়াব তার জীবন।
শুনিলে সখীত সকল বিবরণ ॥
প্রতিশ্রুত সই ছিলাম কুবুজার,
সেই প্রতিজ্ঞা পুরাতে সাধের ব্রজ হতে,
আসিতে হইয়াছে মথুরায়।
তা বলে বৃন্দে সখি, হয়োনা অন্তরে দুখী,
আমি রাধা বই কারুর নইত কখন ॥

It is needless to comment on the tone and spirit of these passages; but the history of love revealed in their course will sufficiently indicate the extent to which the Kabiwālās debased the tenderness, passion and spirituality of earlier Baiṣṇab poetry.

1 *Ibid.* pp. 35-36.
2 *Ibid.* pp. 38-39.

LOWERING OF THE LITERARY IDEAL

This spiritual inadequacy of the songs of the Kabiwālās necessarily involved a lowering of the literary ideal. There is no doubt here and there, in Rām Basu or in Haru Ṭhākur, a desire for nobler utterance; yet generally speaking, the entire mentality of the Kabi-poets was never of a superior order. They are artists who still handle worn-out themes in old formal ways without the earlier grasp upon them, without fervour of conviction and without anything of perceptive delicacy. Some of the Kabiwālās, no doubt, were men of high natural gifts, but they moved less freely within a narrow and degenerated sphere of thoughts and ideas. The mental attitude of their audience and submission to its influence no doubt proved unwholesome to the growth of their poetry; but they themselves were incapable of interpreting life in any large and original way, and therefore limited themselves, wisely or unwisely, to ministering chiefly unto the curiously uncritical habits of the time which demanded nothing more than the transient excitement of cheap rhetoric and cheap ideas. In the period in which they flourished, men had been deprived of a free political and social life, a central capital, the peace and security of an ordered existence and other conditions adequate to the intellectual requirements of an expansive literature. The old style having fallen into decay, the literary ideal could never be very high nor were the opportunities abundant enough for unfolding whatever potentialities this poetry possessed.

ARTISTIC INAḌEQUACY OF KABI-POETRY

The Kabi-literature, therefore, among its crowd of agreeable poems, had produced very few masterpieces, very few works of superb genius destined to immortality. There is a carelessness, a want of balance, a defect of judgment in the choice of materials and their management, a slovenliness of execution throughout the work of this period. Care and grace of style can be expected in the literary craftsman who

writes down his thoughts at leisure, for he can rewrite his sentences, recast his phrases, remould stanzas, thus achieving the proper art of style; but the Kabiwālās, who were hardly a lettered class of leisured writers, could never find abundance of time or patience to do so. They made use of whatever poetic talents they possessed in contributing to the transient amusement of a hardly less illiterate public; and their offhand style, which could be elevating only when the inspiration itself was noble, naturally resulted in a dead level of the commonplace or the conventional.

ITS AFFECTATION AND ARTIFICIALITY

To arrest the fugitive attention of the audience, the Kabiwālās make abundant use of the borrowed tricks of conventional rhetoric. It is certainly true that out of ten verses even whole stanzas may be found which do not lack power; but, generally speaking, beauty and refinement yield place to a constant striving after effect, to an attempt at clever and spirited improvisation, wanting entirely in strength, art or polish, but capable of awakening the easily excitable popular enthusiasm. They composed too fast to compose well; and their critical sense was not sufficiently strong to save them from all the faults of fatal fluency and fertility. Hence we find the fault of repetition, frequency of stock-phrases, monotony of identical form and idea, singular baldness of details, childish jingle of weakly, though effective words, which are unavoidable in oral composition but which appear dull and flat in reading. The sentiment is too often trite and the ideas conventional; and the author, in his futile attempt to disguise his want of originality by frequent affectation and constant use of stilted devices, becomes thoroughly artificial and unconvincing. One of the tricks which is peculiarly favoured by the Kabiwālās for the purpose of impressing upon the fickle sensibilities of an uncritical audience is the excessive use of alliteration and pun. When used with moderation and judgment, alliteration and punning

are, no doubt, useful ornaments of poetical expression; but the Kabiwālās succumbed to the delusion of imagining that alliteration and punning are the chief ends of poetry. It is needless to cite instances, when instances are so abundant, but the following passage[1] as well as the passage quoted at p. 292 will sufficiently indicate the excess to which this habit was carried:

গেল গেল কুল কুল, যাক্ কুল, তাহে নই আকুল।
লয়েছি যাহার কুল সে আমারে প্রতিকূল।
যদি কুলকুণ্ডলিনী অনুকূলা হন্ আমায়
অকূলের তরী কূল পাবে পুনরায়।
এখন ব্যাকুল হয়ে কি দুকূল হারাবো সই।
তাহে বিপক্ষে হাসিবে যত রিপুচয়॥ (রামবসু)

Even sometimes in these strivings after alliterative appeal, the poet completely sets at defiance even ordinary rules of grammar and composition:

একে নবীন বয়স তাতে সুসভ্য কাব্যরসে রসিকে।
মাধুর্য্য গাম্ভীর্য্য তাতে দাম্ভীর্য্য নাই
আর আর বৌ যেমন ধারা ব্যাপিকে।
অধৈর্য্য হেরে তোরে সজনী ধৈর্য্য ধরা নাহি যায়॥ [2]

Leaving aside a few deservedly popular pieces which indicate a desire for untrammelled and spontaneous utterance, we find throughout the work of the Kabiwālās an abuse of the imagination and the intellect. It cannot be denied indeed that some of the Kabiwālās possessed undoubted poetic powers; but they often neglected natural sentiment and made an exhibition of artfulness. The founts of earlier inspiration had been failing and poetry itself coming to be regarded as the means of displaying elaborate conceits, extravagant fancies, bold metaphors and excessive hyperboles. Many of

1 *Saṃbād-prabhākar*, Āśvin 1261, p. 11; *Gupta-ratnoddhār* ed. Kedarnath Bandyopadhyay, p. 151; *Prīti-gīti*, p. 476.

2 Quoted in *Sādhanā*, 1302 B.S., pt. ii, p. 65.

these poets are martyrs to verbal nicety. Fancy is preferred to sense and exuberance of imagery to chastened style. That the education of the Kabiwālās lacked in scholastic strictness produced one good effect, no doubt, namely, that whenever they turned to familiar themes or depended upon their natural genius, their poetry was marked by a sincere homeliness and a swinging and dashing lyrism rare in the precise and meditative utterances of latter-day poets; yet this very lack of training fostered in them a false and uncritical taste in the choice of poetical ornaments and a singular indifference to the value of artistic restraint.

ITS DIFFUSE AND INFLATED STYLE

The poetical style is often very diffuse and inflated, if not trite or given to futile adorning of trivialities; and it is very seldom that we meet with sustained flights of condensed, poignant and forcible utterance. The extreme fluency and prolixity of the Kabiwālās stood effectually in the way of their attaining well-balanced artistic effect. The poet is very seldom able to sustain his inspiration from the beginning to the end of his composition. In the beautiful song of Nitāi Bairāgī already referred to[1]

বঁধূর বাঁশী বাজে বুঝি বিপিনে ।
শ্যামের বাঁশী বাজে বুঝি বিপিনে ।।
নহে কেন অঙ্গ অবশো হইলো
সুধা বরিষিলো শ্রবণে ।।
বৃক্ষডালে বসি পক্ষী অগণিতো
জড়বতো কোন্ কারণে ।
যমুনার জলে বহিছে তরঙ্গ
তরু হেলে বিনে পবনে ।।

1 *Saṃbād-prabhākar*, Agrahāyaṇ 1, 1261, p. 7; Kedarnath Bandyopadhyay, *Gupta-ratnoddhāra*, p. 176; *Kabioyālādiger Gīt*, p. 61; *Saṃgīt-sār-saṃgraha*, ii. 1047; *Prīti-gīti*, p. 828.

একি একি সখি একি গো নিরখি
দেখ দেখি সব গোধনে।
তুলিয়ে বদনো নাহি খায় তৃণো
আছে যেন হীন চেতনে ॥
হায়, কিসেরো লাগিয়ে বিদরয়ে হিয়ে
উঠি চমকিয়ে সঘনে।
অকস্মাতো একি প্রেমো উপজিলো
সলিলো বহিছে নয়নে ॥
আরো একদিন শ্যামেরো ঐ বাঁশী
বেজেছিলো কাননে।
কুলো লাজো ভয়ো হরিলে তাহাতে
মরিতেছি গুরুগঞ্জনে ॥

the beginning and some of the concluding lines are fine, but we are left with a sense of inadequacy with regard to the whole and individual parts of the song.

ITS INEQUALITY

There are queer ups and downs in artistic execution, and the poetical inspiration is not kept up uniformly throughout. Those who pin their poetical faith upon "patches", the great mass of Kabi-songs presents examples of certainly great beauty; but taken as a whole, the poetry is unequal in merit and side by side with higher flights, there are depths of pathos hardly to be paralleled. The common allurements of narrative interest, of varied subject or of striking idea are so rare in this poetry that it is necessary for the poet to screw his inspiration always to the sticking place so that he may not fail. But to reach the full white heat, the steady blaze of poetic emotion is not uniformly possible with these poets; and therefore it is not surprising to find a large amount of tolerable and even flat and insipid verse obtaining side by side with songs of intensely moving quality. Coming to the less inspired later Kabiwālās we find in them a bold use of

colloquialism which is sometimes appealing, no doubt, through its veracity and raciness, but which very frequently degenerates into unlicensed slang or unredeemed verbiage. No one would seriously contend, for instance, that the following lines of Bholā Mayarā, though racy and ingenious, contain a single spark of poetry:

নাটুর নীচে নাড়ু নড়ে লাড্ডু নয় ভাই।
বৃন্দাবনে বসে দেখ বস্থ ঘোষের রাই ॥
ঘোম্‌টা খুলে চোম্‌তা মারে কোম্‌টা বড় ভারি।
তিন লম্ফে লঙ্কা পার, হাস্‌ছে শুক সারি ॥
ঝাঁঝা মেয়ের বেটা হোলো অমাবস্যায় চাঁদ।
আণ্টনি জবাব দাও নইলে বাঁধবে বড় ফাঁদ ॥

IN SPITE OF ARTISTIC INADEQUACY ITS TRUE POETIC SPIRIT

But in spite of this artistic inadequacy of Kabi-poetry, it should never be relegated to the lumber-room of literary curiosity; nor is this poetry to be dismissed as a mere paraphrase of the commonplaces of Baiṣṇab poetry. It is true that the works of the Kabiwālās hardly exhibit any profundity, poignancy or weight. It is not marked by supreme splendour of imagination or exuberance of inventive thought. But, after all is said, it cannot but be admitted that some of the despised Kabiwālās *are* poets and not poetical curiosities, and that if Kabi-poetry does not always attain a high level of poetical excellence, the level it occasionally reaches is striking enough as a symptōm of the presence of the true poetical spirit which it is often impossible to detect for years together in other periods of literary history. Even in the emphatically minor Kabiwālās—often persons quite unknown or unimportant in literature as persons—we come across charming things, lines and phrases and stanzas of exquisite beauty, indicating a general diffusion of the poetic spirit which had made even such inferior songsters beautifully articulate.

THE CHARACTERISTIC QUALITY OF KABI-POETRY

One important and characteristic feature of Kabi-poetry consists in the fact that although it was in no sense popular poetry dealing, as it did, with conventional themes in conventional form, yet it expressed, through its poets who were of the people, what the people had of the noblest and sincerest as well as of the grossest; and in virtue of this it could be appreciated by the people at large. It may be true that popular appreciation is not the sure touchstone of poetic quality; yet we would lapse into the error of academical dogmatism if we do not take into account the hold which this poetry possessed upon the popular mind as one of the important factors in our consideration. Even while dealing with conventional Baiṣṇab themes, Kabi-poetry is marked by the sincere and unaffected religiousness of the popular mind, if not always by the true spirit of Baiṣṇab literature. In art, in ideas, in poetical inspiration, the Kabiwālās may not be regarded as the true inheritors of ancestral genius, yet in honest religious feeling, in sound and simple faith, they do not compare unfavourably with their great predecessors.

ITS TREATMENT OF THE THEMES OF BIRAHA AND ĀGAMANĪ

But it is not here that we find the genius of Kabi-poetry finding its fullest scope. The conditions under which it might have become a legitimate development of Baiṣṇab-poetry had been non-existent and, fortunately, or unfortunately, Kabi-poetry had come under conditions and influences totally different. The excellence of Kabi-poetry rests, therefore, not so much upon its rehandling of older themes, but upon its presentation of less pretentious but more homely and natural themes which, if these poets were not the first to treat, they were at least the first to work up with considerable effectiveness. Rām Basu's treatment of the themes of *biraha* and *āgamanī* is widely known and deserves its reputation ; but in these, among other themes, not Rām Basu alone but

most of the Kabiwālās excelled and found a congenial scope for the display of their natural poetical genius. It is not, however, in the themes themselves so much as in the treatment that the characteristic feature of Kabi-poetry is seen at its best. We shall have to come back to this point later on ; but it may be noted here that these songs, in their sincere force of natural passion and affection and in their simple observation of common things, form a class by themselves, the value of which can never be over-estimated, although most of them have been so hackneyed to us in various ways or have been so queerly dressed in a diction long out of fashion, that even respectable critics have been led to treat them with unfeigned contempt proverbially associated with familiar things. In these *biraha* songs, however, the note of simplicity and sincerity is unmistakable. There is no thinking about thinking or feeling about feeling, but honest human passion is expressed with a clear vision and with exquisite directness of speech. These poets sang no longer of the loves of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa or find in them a suitable frame-work for voicing their individual or universal human sentiment. They sing of natural human beings, often of themselves, and of the naturalistic human passion ; and their expression of the triumph and despair of love, if somewhat crude and even gross, is not sicklied over with reflectiveness as in most modern poets. In the *āgamanī* songs, again, the domestic atmosphere of a Bengali home with its simple joys and sorrows, which find expression in the picture of Menakā the mother and Umā the daughter,[1] creates a peculiar

1 This trait also expresses i self in the *goṣṭha* and *sakhī-saṃbād* where Yaśodā is generally speaking to the boy Kṛṣṇa. It cannot be determined how far in their *bhabānī-biṣayak* songs, the Kabiwālās influenced or were influenced by the writers of devotional dittis who flourished by their side. There is, however, considerable similarity of trait between the *mālsi* of Rāmprasād and his followers and the *āgamanī* of the Kabiwālās, who were undoubtedly influenced by the special *āgamanī* or *bijayā* songs of Rāmprasād or Kamalākānta. Similarly there is some general resemblance between the *biraha* songs

charm of sweet and tender homeliness which is rare in modern poetry. And it is by force of its tenderness, its simplicity and human interest, wherever these qualities may be found, that Kabi-poetry is so appealing. In their form, again, these songs possess not much of stylistic grace and their bold use of colloquialism is often bare and unadorned ; yet the veracity of the vernacular and the raciness of the spoken idiom impart to these songs a charm of their own, easy, direct and simple, yet plastic and artful in their very want of art.

ITS PERMANENT LITERARY VALUE AND APPEAL

It will be amply clear from this that Kabi-poetry cannot be regarded merely as a belated product of the Baiṣṇab school, although in a distant way it attempted to carry on the older tradition. It possesses a characteristic trait of its own which marks it off as a distinct, though not independent, type of utterance. If it is not music yearning like a god in pain, it is characterised by full-throated ease and robust healthy mentality at least in certain spheres. Higher flights of poetry were unsuited to its hard and narrow environment ; the rambling life of its votaries stored their minds with little learning or culture ; they indulged in metrical exercises partly as the means of earning livelihood under the not-too-liberal patronage of the isolated aristocracy of the priests and the princes, of the plain democracy of poor peasants in the remote villages, and of the respectable middle class of thrifty merchants and banians in the crowded cities. Though the roar of the cannon at Plassey or Udaynala was but heard faintly by them and they were quite oblivious of the world around them, living and moving in an isolated social world or a conventional poetic world of their own ; yet the latter

of the Kabiwālās and the love-lyrics of the Ṭappā-writers. There must have been some amount of mutual influence, and it is quite possible that both these represent phases of a certain humanising tendency of the literature of the age in which they flourished.

half of 18th century with its confused energy, diffused culture and political, social and mental chaos did not demand nor could inspire a literature of great value. There was hardly any leisure for serious writing ; what was wanted was trifles capable of affording excitement, pleasure and song. This poetry, therefore, was never meant for a critical audience, and critical sense or practised art the Kabiwālās hardly possessed any. They lacked ideas and ideal utterance and were constantly hampered by the incubus of a conventional literary tradition ; there is a good deal of sad stuff in their verse-impromptu ; all this and more is admitted. But inspite of these drawbacks and difficulties, Kabi-poetry, in its best aspect, is an entirely homespun production, kindly, genial and indulgent, capable of awakening and keeping popular enthusiasm and possessing simplicity and liquidity of utterance, which draws its bone and thews and sinew from the language and ideas of the people themselves who begot them and with whose central life-force they have an unconscious and spontaneous rapport. If it is not popular poetry in the true sense of the term, being mainly derivative and reproductive, its contact with the people, while debasing its nature in certain respects, gave it at the same time a robust and healthy character and a sincere homeliness unaffected by literary prepossessions.

Kabi-poetry, therefore, is of a complex character and defies all systematic analysis or rigid labelling as a recognised species to be put into a definite pigeon-hole marked out by the literary critic. Its merit is simplicity, and its importance lies in the fact that although the Kabiwālās were incapable of producing the highest type of poetry or painting life broadly or powerfully, they served literature in their simple and homely way by furnishing a stimulus to the emotional life of the country. They succeeded very often in piercing through the gauds and trimmings of an effete literary tradition and coming direct to the passion and emotion which throb and pulsate in the individual. The

ground on which they tread is as plain and simple as that which the peasant daily treads upon with his uncouth feet; yet it is from this common and universal soil that they draw their bracing and genial character. The Kabiwālās may not have been affluent inheritors of the spiritual estate of their ancestors, but the apparently trifling things of art which had come down to them as their heirlooms served amply for their unmistakable insignia of rank and status. Although universal popular appreciation, as we have already stated, is not the true test of poetic merit, such popular valuation is not to be wholly rejected as a false index by the pedantry of cultured criticism.

ITS QUALITY AS SONGS

Again, it must be borne in mind that most of these compositions were *songs* and not lyric poems, and must be judged as such. It is not possible nor desirable to estimate the value of songs by the standard by which we consider poetical compositions. We must appreciate a song through the ear and not feel it with the eye alone. It is not possible to convey an idea of its melody through an appreciative essay; it must be actually heard before its charm can be fully realised. This remark applies equally to the case of Baiṣṇab *Padābalīs*. Those who have listened to Baiṣṇab songs as well as to the songs of the Kabiwālās, sung by an expert and tasteful singer, may appreciate their charmingness in a greater degree. When seen in print these delightfully melodious things lose much of their appeal. It may be urged that this element should be rigidly ruled out of court in a strictly literary estimate; but it must not be forgotten that the fame of most of these Kabiwālās rests more upon their musical than upon their literary capacity, and that the song-element preponderates in the various forms of ancient literature from Baiṣṇab poetry down to Ṭappā, Yātrā, Pāñchāli and therefore cannot be totally ignored in any estimate of old Bengali literature or its offshoot.

ITS SYSTEM OF VERSIFICATION

This brings us naturally to the question of the prosodic range of Kabi-poetry and the arrangement of its numbers, its metrical system being closely connected with the conditions of its musical expression. At first sight the verse-system of the Kabiwālās seems to follow no definite rule of arrangement; and this has been more than once severely denounced by puzzled critics.[1] The lines vary in length, are apparently irregular in rhythm, imperfect in structure and uncertain in accentual or literal or syllabic arrangement; but a careful study will show that there is some sort of harmony in the midst of this apparent discord. It is, no doubt, true that in some of the Kabiwālās there is a hopeless indifference to prosodic regulation; that with regard to the number of words, syllables or accents required in each line, there is no hard and fast rule; and that as such it is impossible to analyse the versification wholly by recognised systems of prosody; yet the verse of the Kabiwālās in spite of their frequent prosodic vagaries is self-regulated, following, as it does, a law of its own which varies naturally according to the irresistible ideal or emotional or melodic suggestion. The compositions must be primarily regarded as songs ; and in songs, variation of long and short lines is immaterial and the rigid rules of metrical arrangement incapable of uniform application. The words and lines are arranged as they naturally sing and fall into apparently inevitable song-rhythm. But the whole effect is not inharmonious; the music is clear and the movement of the rhymed verses of varying length is easy and natural. The spirit of this verse-system is that of unbounded lawlessness bound only by a law of its own; that of resistance to the established ideal of stereotyped verses like *payār* or *tripadī* which possess a more or less fixed system of letters or pauses. In this, again, Kabi-poets are following

1 See for instance the remarks of Rabindranath Thakur in *Sādhanā* (1302 B.S.), pt. ii, p. 65, reprinted in his *Lok-Sāhitya* under the heading 'Kabi-saṅgīt' at p. 44.

in the footsteps of their Baiṣṇab predecessors, though with a great deal more of unhampered freedom. Whatever may be the defects, the system gives us, however, variety of arrangement, versatility of combination and infinite suggestion of new verse-forms.

THE RHYME-ARRAGEMENT OF KABI-SONGS

In general structure of the songs, the Kabiwālās followed a more or less definite system of rhyme-arrangement. The exact signification of much of their musical technicalities is lost to us. But it would be enough to state that the whole musical gamut of each song is arranged in ascerding and descending order into several divisions, bound to each other by a peculiar system of rhyme-ending. These divisions, in their succession, in each complete song, are: *chitān, parchitān, phukā, meltā, mahaḍā, saoyāri* (not present, however, in all songs), *khād*, and then second *phukā* and second *meltā*, and lastly *antarā*. If the word-composition is continued, then, *chitān* etc. come again in their successive order. Now as to the system of rhyme-ending, the *chitān* and *parchitān* rhyme together. The *phukā* has a different rhyme-ending; so also *meltā* which, however, rhymes in its turn with *mahaḍā* and *khād*. The second *phukā* has an independent rhyme, but the second *meltā* rhymes again with *mahaḍā*, while *antarā* closes with a different rhyme-ending altogether. The number of lines which each of these musical divisions contains is immaterial, but it is essential that the lines should follow the rhyme-arrangement indicated above; and this gives, as in stanzaic poems or sonnets, a compactness of arrangement. Taking each division to contain one line we may indicate the rhyme-arrangement in a normal scheme in this way (five rhymes in all *abcde*):

a Chitān
a Parchitān
b Phukā
c Meltā

c *Mahaḍā*
c *Saoyāri*
c *Khād*
d *Second Phukā*
c *Second Meltā*
e *Antarā*[1]

Here is an illustration from one of the famous songs of Rām Basu arranged in the order indicated[2]·—

১ চিতান। গত নিশিযোগে আমি হে দেখেছি স্বপন।
১ পরচিতান। এল হে সেই আমার তারাধন।
১ ফুকা। দাঁড়ায়ে দুয়ারে, বলে মা কই মা কই মা কই আমায়
দেখা দাও দুখিনীরে।
১ মেল্‌তা। অম্‌নি দুবাহু পসারি, উমা কোলে করি, আনন্দেতে
আমি আমি নয়।
মহড়া। ওহে গিরি, গা তোল হে, উমা এলেন হিমালয়।
সওয়ারি। উঠ দুর্গা দুর্গা বলে, দুর্গা কর কোলে, মুখে বল
জয় জয় দুর্গা জয়।
খাদ। কন্যা পুত্র প্রতি বাৎসল্য তায় তাচ্ছিল্য করা নয়।।
২ ফুকা। আঁচল ধরে তারা বলে ছি মা কি মা, মাগো,
ওমা মা বাপের কি এমনি ধারা।
২ মেলতা। গিরি তুমি যে অগতি বুঝে না পার্ব্বতী,
প্রসূতীর অখ্যাতি জগন্ময়।
অন্তরা। মা হওয়া যত জ্বালা যাদের মা বলবার আছে তারাই জানে।
তিলেক না হেরিয়ে মর্ম্মে ব্যথা পাই কর্ম্মসূত্রে সদা স্নেহে টানে।

1 The earlier Kabi-songs are, however, simple in structure, having generally *mahaḍā*, *chitān* and *antarā* only. There is some difference of opinion on this point and different accounts are given. According to a writer in *Bāndhab*, Pous 1282, p. 265, the four divisions of Kabi-songs are *chitān*, *mukh* (or *mahaḍā*), *khād*, *antarā* ; or, in some cases, *chitān*, *dhuyā*, *antarā*. *jhumair*.

2 *Prācīn Kabi-saṃgraha*, pp. 4-5 ; *Saṃbād-prabhākar*, Kārtik 1261, p. 4.

KABI-POETRY BEFORE 1760
GOṂJLĀ-GUṂI

Of Kabi-poetry before 1760, not much is known. Only a few names stand out of the general obscurity; but with regard to these names hardly any detail is known. The earliest, if not the most illustrious, Kabiwālā of whom we have any record is one Goṃjlā Guṃi. In the issue of the *Saṃbād-prabhākar*[1] already referred to, Īśvar Gupta tells us that Goṃjlā flourished "about 140 or 150 years" before his own time; and this would place the poet as early as the beginning of the 18th century. Of this Kabiwālā however, we know nothing except that he formed a party of professional songsters (*kabir dal*) who used to sing in "the house of the rich" and that he had three disciples who in later times became famous Kabiwālās. But we have no evidence to ascertain whether he was the originator of this form of singing or (which is more probable) whether he had his predecessors in the line from whom he inherited his art. Of his composition, only one or two fragments have been rescued from oblivion by the indefatigable editor of the *Prabhākar*[2], from which we quote this curious literary specimen:

এস এস চাঁদ্‌বদনি।
এ রসে নিরসো কোরো না ধনি ॥
তোমাতে আমাতে একই অঙ্গ,
তুমি কমলিনী, আমি সে ভৃঙ্গ,
অনুমানে বুঝি আমি সে ভুজঙ্গ,
তুমি আমার তায় রতন মণি ॥

1 *Saṃbād-prabhākar*, Agrahāyaṇ 1, 1261. It is not known on what evidence Nanda and Raghu have been placed by Dinesh Chandra Sen (*Baṅga Bhāṣā O Sāhitya*, 2nd Ed., p. 607) in the 11th century.

2 Also quoted in *Prāchīn Kabi-saṁgraha*, p. 127-8; *Gupta-ratnoddhār*, p. 205. The last four lines are omitted in *Baṅga Sāhitya Parichay*, vol. ii, p. 1551.

Also a little fragment

প্রাণ তোরে হেরিয়ে দুখো দূরে গেল মোর।
বিরহ-অনলো হইলো শীতলো, জুড়ালো প্রাণো চকোর ॥

তোমাতে আমাতে একই কায়া,
আমি দেহ প্রাণ তুমি লো ছায়া,
আমি মহাপ্রাণী তুমি লো মায়া,
মনে মনে ভেবে দেখ আপনি ।।

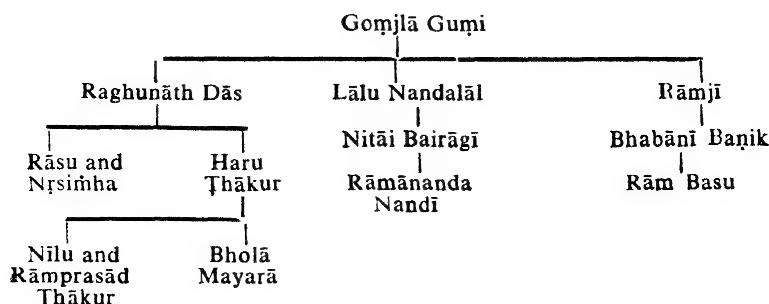
It will be noticed that both in theme and style these songs, if they are genuine, are more of the nature of the Ṭappā; and we are told that in those days, such songs used to be sung, after the fashion of Ṭappās beginning with the *mahaḍā* and then proceeding to the *chitān* and *antarā* ; while in later times singing used to begin, as already indicated, with the *chitān*. From these little fragments, however, nothing definite can be inferred with regard to the nature and history of Kabi-poetry of this period.

AND HIS THREE DISCIPLES

The three disciples of Goṃjlā alluded to above were Lālu Nandalāl, Raghunāth Dās and Rāmjī Dās. Their dates are unknown, but they must have been living considerably later than the middle of the 18th century ; for Haru Ṭhākur (born about 1738) was a disciple of Raghu, while Nityānanda-dās Bairāgi (born about 1751) acknowledged Lālu Nandalāl, if not Rāmjī also, as his master.[1] Raghu had two other great disciples, who in later times earned much poetic fame, in Rāsu and Nṛsiṃha. Rāmjī, on the other hand, found a

1 *Saṃbād-prabhākar*, Agrahāyaṇ 1261, p. 5 ; but one of the songs attributed to Nitāi by Iśvar Gupta as well as by later collectors (*Kabi-wālādiger Gīt*, p. 116 ; *Gupta-ratnoddhār*, p. 184) bears the *bhaṇitā* of Rāmjī Dās, which fact would probably indicate, if the attribution to Nitāi is correct, that Rāmjī and not Lālu Nandalāl was Nitāi's Guru. Iśvar Gupta speaks of Lālu Nandalāl as having flourished about eighty years before his own time. This rough reckoning would put Nandalāl in the latter part of the 18th century. Eleventh century, however (p. 309, foot note 1), is too absurd a date for Nanda or Raghu. Opinions on this point vary, but Iśvar Gupta's seems to be more reliable than later unauthenticated conjectures.

worthy disciple in Bhabānī Baṇik[1] who in his turn was the early patron and instructor of Rām Basu[2] considerably junior to most of these Kabiwālās. These are the names of the earlier group of Kabiwālās. It will be noticed however that there is a sort of inter-relation between the earlier Kabiwālās, and all of them derived their poetical origin from Goṃjlā Guṃi. The poetical relationship may be thus indicated:



During the time of Goṃjlā Guṃi and his three disciples, we have no record of the existence of 'rival parties' or of any 'poetical combats' which prevailed so much in later times and which was indeed an essential characteristic of this form of entertainment. It was in the next generation that we hear for the first time of rivalries and oppositions between Nitāi Dās and Bhabānī, between Haru Ṭhākur and Kṛṣṇa Chandra Charmakār (Keṣṭā Muchi), between young Rām Basu and Haru Ṭhākur who must have been an old man at this time, as Rām Basu's 'reply' at one of these fights seem to imply[3].

1 *Saṃbād-prabhākar, loc. cit.*

2 *Ibid*, Āśvin 1261, p. 2.

3 It runs thus: ঠাকুর বাঁচবে না আর বিস্তর দিন।
তোমার চক্ষে ধরেছে পোকা স্বর্ণরেখা অতি ক্ষীণ ॥

LĀLU NANDALĀL

Of Lālu Nandalāl's composition Īśvar Gupta has given only one specimen which deserves to be quoted[1]:

হলো এই সুখোলাভো পীরিতে।
চিরদিন গেল কাঁদিতে ॥
হয়েছে না হবে কলঙ্ক আমার গিয়েছে না যাবে কুল।
ডুবেছি না ডুবে দেখি পাতালো কত দূর।
শেষে এই হোলো কাণ্ডারি পালালো তরণী লাগিলো ভাসিতে ॥
ধনোপ্রাণো মনো যৌবনো দিয়ে শরণো লইলাম যার
তবু তার মন পাওয়া সখি আমারে হোলো ভার।
না পুরিলো সাধো, উদয়ে বিচ্ছেদো, মিছে পরিবাদো জগতে ॥

RAGHUNĀTH DĀS: HIS RELATION TO HARU ṬHĀKUR

Of Raghunāth no trustworthy account remains. Some say that he was a sat-śūdra, while others think that he was a blacksmith by caste[2]. According to a third view he was a weaver[3]. Salkiā and Guptipāḍā, in turns, have been noted as the place where he lived. Of his composition it is difficult to say anything definite ; for although two or three fragments have come down to us, containing his own *bhaṇitā* or signature, it is not perfectly clear that these songs were really of his own composition. The tradition is current that Haru, during early years of pupilship under Raghu, used to get his productions corrected by his master and that, out of gratitude, he used to attach to them his master's *bhaṇitā*[4]. There is nothing to discredit this tradition which relates to a phenomenon not rare or improbable in our literary history.

1 *Saṃbād-prabhākar, loc. cit.*

2 *Baṅgabhāṣār Lekhak*, p. 380.

3 *Nabyabhārat*, B.S. 1131, p. 600.

4 *Ibid*, pp. 600-601 ; *Kabiwālādiger Gīt* (1862), p. 66 ; *Saṃbād-prabhākar, loc. cit.*

The number of these songs, however, is limited[1]; and all of them, rightly or wrongly, have been attributed to Haru Ṭhākur. It may be quite possible, however, that some of these songs were the genuine works of Raghu. But the disciple's gratitude seems to have got its own reward and to-day Haru Ṭhākur is supposed to be the author of all songs bearing Raghu's signature. The tradition alluded to, however, does not disallow the supposition that the revision of the master might have given an entirely new shape to the novice's composition, and that as such it is only in the fitness of things that the songs should go in the name of the master. There are three songs extant of this description, of which one is, rightly or wrongly, attributed to Raghu in *Baṅgabhāṣār Lekhak* and in *Prāti-gīti* without any mention of Haru. The song is this:

ধিক্ ধিক্ তার জীবন যৌবন ।
এমন প্রেমের সাধ করে যেই জন, সে চাহে না আমি তার যোগাই মন ।।
যেখানেতে না রহিল মানী জনার মান, সে কেমন অজ্ঞান, তারে সঁপে প্রাণ
সেধে কেঁদে হয়ে গেছে কলঙ্ক ভাজন ।
একি প্রণয়ের রীতি সই শুনেছ এমন, কেহ সুখে থাকে
কেহ দুঃখে জ্বালাতন ।
শয়নে স্বপনে মনে যে যারে ধেয়ায় সে জন তাহায় ফিরে নাহি চায়,
তথাপি না পারে তারে হতে বিস্মরণ ।।
সখি, পিরীতি পরম ধন জগতের সার, সুজনে কুজনে হলে হয় ছারখার ।
সামান্য খেদের কথা একি প্রাণসই, কারেই বা কই, প্রাণে মরে রই,
ঘরে পরে আরো তাহে করয়ে লাঞ্ছন ।
যারে ভাবি আপন সই, তার এ বোধ নাই, এমন প্রেমের মুখে
তারো মুখে ছাই ।

1 Besides the one quoted here, two such songs are given in *Kabiwālādiger Gīt* at pp. 73-75 and at pp. 91-93 in the collection of Haru Ṭhākur's songs. These are also similarly given as Haru's in *Saṃbād-prabhākar*, Pous 1261.

হেন অরণ্য রোদনে ফল আছে কি, এ হতে সুখী একা যে থাকি
ধরে বেঁধে করা কিনা প্রেম উপার্জ্জন ॥
যার স্বভাব লম্পট সই তার কি এ বোধ আছে
কি করিবে তব প্রেম অনুরোধ,
অতি দৃঢ় উভয়েতে হওয়া এ কেমন, এ হেন মিলন না দেখি কখন,
রঘু বলে কোথা মিলে দুজনে সুজন ।

RĀMJĪ DĀS

Of the last disciple of Goṃjlā, Rāmjī Dās, nothing is known except that Bhabānī Baṇik (as well as Nitāi Dās) was his disciple; but no work of his has survived. Only one song, however, which is often attributed to Nitāi[1], bears the *bhaṇitā* of Rāmjī Dās. It is in no way very remarkable except for its ingenuity and fancifulness.

KEṢṬĀ MUCHI

We hear also of Keṣṭā Muchi, who remained outside this group but who belonged to this generation, as a very popular songster much sought after and respected, although obviously he was a shoemaker by caste. Even later on Haru Ṭhākur, himself a Brahman, did not disdain to cross swords with him; but we are told that Haru Ṭhākur, at that time a young man probably, had the worse luck of the duel. It is a pity we do not know much of this mysterious figure. Inspite of all his efforts Īśvar Gupta could not get hold of more than one incomplete fragment of this old master, itself not a very good specimen[2].

হরি, কে বুঝে তোমার এ লীলে ।
ভাল প্রেম করিলে ॥

1 *Vide ante* p. 310, foot note 1. It begins with

সে কেন রাধারে কলঙ্কিনী করে রাখিলে ।
বুঝিতে নারি সখি শ্যামের এ লীলে ॥

The song, too long for quotation, will be found in *Gupta-ratnoddhār*, p. 184; *Kabiwālādiger Gīt*, p. 116.

2 *Saṃbād-prabhākar, loc. cit.*

হইলে ভূপতি, কুবুজা যুবতী পাইয়ে শ্রীপতি
শ্রীমতী রাধারে রহিলে ভুলে।
শ্যাম সেজেছ হে বেশ, ওহে হৃষীকেশ,
রাখালের বেশ এখন কোথায় লুকালে।
মাতুলো বধিলে, প্রতুলো করিলে, গোপ গোপীকুলে
গোকুলে অকুলে ভাসায়ে দিলে॥

These earlier metrical essays of the Kabiwālās, to judge from the few extant fragments, are thus not so crude as to be contemptuously set aside ; but they are at the same time not so creditable in a view of the fact that simultaneously, in another sphere, Bhāratchandra was charming his royal patron with his art and his music, Durgāprasād was painting his picturesque description of the descent of the sacred river, Rāmeśvara was narrating his exceedingly human and homely account of Śiba-Gaurī, and Rāmprasād was pouring out his soul in devotional ecstasy.

KABI-POETRY AFTER 1760 (TO 1830)

ORGANISATION OF KABIR DAL AND KABI-YUDDHA

In the effusions of the next generation we find better quality and greater elaboration of Kabi-poetry. Simultaneously with a certain advance in the artistic direction, both in form and substance, we hear of systematic organisation of "parties" (*kabir dal*) and "poetical combats" (*kabi-yuddha* or *kabir-laḍāi*), which no doubt thrilled many a heart in those days, but with which the literary historian has no practical concern except in so far as this circumstance affected the making of these songs and their poetical quality. We need not narrate at length how Bhabānī Baṇik, until reinforced by Rām Basu, must have found a tough opponent in Nitāi Bairāgī[1]; how unlucky Haru Ṭhākur, an old veteran and winner of a hundred "fights" as he was, had the humiliation of being worsted not only Keṣṭā Muchi but also by a young-

1 *Sambād-prabhākar*, Agrahāyaṇ 1261, p. 6.

ling like Rām Basu[1]; or how Anthony was attacked by Ṭhākur Siṃha but paid him back in his own coin.[2] But this necessity of poetical rivalry, in which quick and witty retort played a great part, and this contamination of popular applause which readily followed such cheap display of ingenuity went a long way in debasing the quality of Kabi-poetry until these poetical extemporisations degenerated into something even worse than the wayside verses that are hawked about and sold for a penny. The later Kabiwālās fell into the vital error of imagining that the sole end of poetical existence consisted in abusing and throwing mud at each other. Over the dull obscenities into which they entered it is better for the critic to keep silence; but we may here recall, for illustration, one or two instances of these retorts, although they do not always display either sobriety or good taste. At a certain sitting at the Śobhābazar Palace the parties of Rām Basu, then an old veteran, and of Nīlu Ṭhākur (a disciple of Rām Basu's old rival Haru Ṭhākur) met. Nīlu was dead but Rāmprasād Ṭhākur was then the leader of the party. Rāmprasād began the attack:

নাইক রাম বোসের এখন সেকেলে পৌরোষ
এখন দল করে হয়েছেন রাম বোস রামকামারের * * ॥

But immediately Rām Basu retorted

তেম্‌নি এই নীলুর দলে রামপ্রসাদ এক্‌টীন্‌।
যেমন ঢাকের পীটে বাঁয়া থাকে বাজেনাক একটি দিন ॥
যেমন রাতভিখারীর ধামা বওয়া থাকে একজন,
হরি নাম বলেনা মুখে পেছু থেকে চাল কুড়ুতে মন,
কর্ম্মে অকর্ম্মা তেম্‌নি ঐ রামপ্রসাদ শর্ম্মা
মন কাজের কাজী ঠাটের বাজী (ভাই রে) !

1 *Nabyabbārat*, 1311, pp. 477-79.

2 Ramgati Nyayaratna, *Baṅgabhāṣā O Sāhitya-biṣayak Prastāb*, 3rd Ed. (1317), p. 196, footnote, quoted in *Baṅgabhāṣā O Sāhitya* at pp. 598-9. For notice of a fight between Anthony and Bholā, see *Bhāratī*, 1303, p. 59 et seq.

ঠিক যেন ধোপার বিশ্বকর্ম্মা,
যেমন বিদ্যেশূন্য বিদ্যেভূষণ, সিদ্ধিরস্তু বস্তুহীন ॥
নীলমণি মলে, নীলমণির দলে ঢুক্‌লো সিংভাঙ্গা এঁড়ে বাছুরের পালে
যেমন নবাব মলে নবাব হলো উজ্জীরালি আড়াই দিন।
যেমন মেগের কাছে পেগের বড়াই ঘরে করে জাঁক,
দুনিয়ার কর্ম্মেতে কুড়ে, ভোজনে দেড়ে, বচনে পুড়িয়ে করেন খাক্ ॥
তেম্‌নি শ্রীছাঁদ, এই পেটকো মুলুকচাঁদ, তরেন রামপ্রসাদ, ধরে কৃষ্ণপ্রসাদ,
যেমন জন্মে কভু হাত পোরে না দোলে লবেদার আস্তীন্ ॥

It is useless to multiply instances[1] and most of them do not bear quotation; but the instance quoted, itself moderate enough in tone, will furnish a hint as to the excess to which the Kabi-fights were carried. Once asked ironically by Ṭhākur Siṃha

বল হে আণ্টুনি আমি একটি কথা জান্‌তে চাই,
এসে এ দেশে এ বেশে তোমার গায়ে কেন কুর্ত্তি নাই ॥

Anthony retorted in abusive language

এই বাঙ্গালায় বাঙ্গালীর বেশে আনন্দে আছি।
হয়ে ঠাকুরে সিংহের বাপের জামাই কুর্ত্তি টুপি ছেড়েছি ॥

While tearing his adversary to pieces, the Kabiwālā incidentally tore to pieces all form, style or decency. The muses, who love solitude and devotional worship, could not be expected to stay at leisure and comfort amid the noise and tumult of this uproarious poetry.

But Rāsu Nṛsiṃha, Haru Ṭhākur, Nitāi Bairāgī and Rām Basu (we hear little of Bhabānī Baṇik[2] the fame of his

1 For Rām Basu's attack on Nīlu and Rāmprasād on another occasion, see *Prāchīn Kabi-saṃgraha*, p. 149, and his attack on Bholā Mayarā who was a disciple of Haru Ṭhākur, *ibid*, p. 148. See also Anāth Kṛṣṇa Deb, *Baṅger Kabitā*, pp. 317-325 ; *Bhāratī*, *loc. cit.* etc.

2 Of Bhabānī Baṇik who lived somewhere in Bāgbazar, Calcutta, and had some reputation as a Kabiwālā in his time, we practically know nothing except what Īśvar Gupta tells us in the *Saṃbād-prabhākar*, Pouṣ 1261. This is what he says: ভবানে বেণে ও নীলুঠাকুর ভোলা ময়রা

disciple, Rām Basu, having overshadowed his reputation), who were the great champions of this generation of Kabi-poetry, were not mere versifiers and their productions were not wholly destitute of poetic merit. Of these Rāsu and Nṛsiṃha come earliest in chronology.

RĀSU (1734-1807) AND NṚSIṂHA (1738-1809?)

The mysterious double personality of Rāsu and Nṛsiṃha, the two brothers who lived and worked together, is a fascinating figure of this group of Kabiwālās. They were so united in their work, which bear their *bhaṇitā* in joint names that it is difficult and inequitable to separate them. It has been plausibly premised[1] that one of them was the poet, the other composed music; but on this point, it is not possible to make any definite statement. Even Īśvar Gupta[2] says: উক্ত উভয় সহোদরের মধ্যে কোন ব্যক্তি গীত ও সুর রচনায় নিপুণ ছিলেন তদ্বিষয়ে আমরা কিছুই জানিতে পারি নাই ।

Rāsu and Nṛsiṃha, though not of obscure origin like the greater number of their fellow-poets, yet afford no exception to the general rule in the obscurity that surrounds their lives.

প্রভৃতি প্রথমে হরুঠাকুরের দলে জিল্ দিত। পরে দোহার অর্থাৎ গায়কের পদে নিযুক্ত হন। এইরূপে কিছু দিন গত করিয়া সকলে ভিন্ন ভিন্ন রূপে স্ব স্ব নামে দল স্থাপন করিলেন। তৎকালে হরু সকলকেই গীত ও সুর প্রদান করিতেন। অতি অল্প দিবস পরেই ভবানে বেণে রামজির অনুগত হইয়া তাহারই নিকট গীত লইতে আরম্ভ করিল, সর্ব্বশেষে রামবসুর আশ্রিত হইয়া সমূহ সুখ্যাতি সংগ্রহ করিল। In the anthology of Bengali love-songs entitled *Prītigīti* (ed. Abinash Chandra Ghosh), three or four songs are attributed to Bhabānī Baṇik at pp. 613, 665, 809, 878-79. These songs, however, although sung by Bhabānī Baṇik in his party, are not of his own composition but have been attributed to Rām Basu or Haru Ṭhākur in all other collections or anthologies (see *Prāchīn Kabi-saṃgraha*, pp. 18-20, 30, 60, 80). Of Bhabānī's own composition, nothing has survived.

1 *Nabyabhārat*, 1311, p. 647.

2 *Saṃbād-prabhākar*, Māgh 1261, quoted in *Janmabhūmī*, 1302, p. 227.

Rāsu was born in 1735 A.D. (1141 B.S.) and Nṛsiṃha in 1738 (1144 B. S.) at Gondalpāḍā near French Chandannagar of a good Kāyastha family.[1] Their father, Ānandīnāth Rāy was a clerk in the military department of the French Government and earned a good deal besides his nominal salary The two boys were sent to the local village-school, and then to their maternal uncle's house at Chinsurah where the missionaries had established a Bengali School (before May's school founded in 1814). They did not do much at school, and so ultimately they were sent back to their father after a year. Ānandīnāth died soon after this ; and thus left to themselves, the boys had freedom enough to live as they liked. They attached themselves to the party of Raghunāth the Kabiwālā, who was the master of Haru Ṭhākur ; but having gained some knowledge of the art they formed a party of their own which soon became popular. They were greatly patronised by Indranārāyaṇ Chaudhurī, Dewan of the French Government ; and Chandannagar soon became a centre of Kabi-song through their activity. Rāsu died at the good old age of seventy-two or seventy-three in 1807 ; Nṛsiṃha survived him for a few years more.

Of Rāsu and Nṛsiṃha's composition, only six songs have come down to us. The number is obviously too small, and the songs themselves too inadequate to allow us to form a just estimate of their powers. These songs all relate to *sakhī-saṃbād* and *biraha*, but we are not sure whether they composed songs on other themes. Tradition says that these were the two themes in which Rāsu and Nṛsiṃha excelled, and the extant songs inspite of their small bulk certainly corroborate this tradition. Here is one of the much-praised pieces on *sakhī-saṃbād*, which inspite of its fanciful note, is not wholly destitute of merit.

1 These biographical details are taken from *Saṃbād-prabhākar, loc. cit.* ; *Nabyabhārat*, 1311, p. 645 et seq. ; *Kabiwālādiger Gīt*, pp. 97-98 ; *Janmabhūmī loc. cit.* etc.

প্রাণনাথো মোরো সেজেছেন্ শঙ্করো
দেখসিয়ে প্রিয়ে ললিতে।
অপরূপো দরশনো আজু প্রভাতে।
বুঝি কারো কাছে রজনী জেগেছে
নয়ন লেগেছে ঢুলিতে ॥
পার্ব্বতীনাথেরো অর্দ্ধ শশধরো
সবিতা অর্দ্ধ কপালেতে।
আমারো নাগরো সেজেছেন সুন্দরো
চন্দন সিন্দুর ভালেতে ॥
হায়! মথনেরো বিষো ভখিয়ে মহেশো
নীল কণ্ঠদেশে নিশানা।
নীলকণ্ঠ নাম অতি অনুপাম
জগতে রয়েছে ঘোষণা ॥
আমার নাগরো গিয়েছিলেন্ কারো
কলঙ্ক-সাগরো মথিতে।
ফুরায়ে মন্থনো এনেছেন্ নিশানো
আঁখির অঞ্জন গলেতে ॥

It will be noticed that in this song, as well as in other songs on the same theme, the characteristic feature lies in its power of gentle banter and soft sarcasm which, though not rare in other Kabiwālās, was wielded with great effect by Rāsu and Nṛsiṃha. In all these songs we have, on the one hand, the extreme simplicity of natural emotion befitting a *mugdhā* heroine, and on the other, there is a sense of pride and self-esteem, which imparts a touch of malicious egoism to these passionate songs. Alluding to Kubjā, the Sakhī says:

শ্যাম, রূপেরো বিচারো যদি মনে করো
মজেছ যাহার কারণে।
ওহে লক্ষ কুব্জারো রূপেরো ভাণ্ডারো
শ্রীমতি রাধারো চরণে ॥······

শ্যাম, ত্যজিলে শ্রীমতি তাহাতে কি ক্ষতি
যুবতী সকলি সহিলো।
ভুজঙ্গ-মাণিকো হোরে নিলো ভেকো
মরমে এ দুখো রহিলো ॥
শ্যাম, প্রদীপেরো আলো প্রকাশ পাইলো
চন্দ্রমা লুকালো গগনে।
ওহে গোখুরের জলো জগতো ব্যাপিলো
সাগর শুকালো তপনে ॥

Or take another

শ্যাম, কার ভাবে ভুলে, কহ কোথা ছিলে
মোজেছিলে কার প্রেমেতে।
প্রভাতে কেমনে আইলে এ স্থানে
নিলাজ বদনো দেখাতে ॥......
শ্যাম, শরমে কি করে বলিহে তোমারে
শ্রীমতী রাধার কথাটি।
এবারে মাধবে যে আনি মিলাবে
সে খাবে রাধার মাথাটি ॥
দিয়ে পদ দুটি মাড়াবে যে মাটি
শ্রীমতী তো সেটি ছোঁবে না।
তুলিয়ে সে মাটি দিবে ছড়া ঝাঁটি
শ্রীরাধার এটি কট্‌কেনা ॥

In their *biraha* songs, again, there is no effeminate indulgence of self-pity or straining after racy perversity, but they are simple, direct and dignified and have considerable restraint of thought and language. The poets ask:

কহ সখি কিছু প্রেমেরি কথা
ঘুচাও আমার মনের ব্যথা ॥
করিলে শ্রবণো হয় দিব্য জ্ঞানো
হেন প্রেমধনো উপজে কোথা ॥

আমি রসিকেরো স্থানে পেয়েছি সন্ধানো
তুমি নাকি জানো প্রেমবারতা।
আমি এসেছি বিবাগে, মনের বিরাগে
প্রীতি-প্রয়াগে মুড়াব মাথা॥

Speaking of the ordinary idea of love they say:

সখি এ সকল প্রেম প্রেম নয়।
ইহাতে মজিয়ে নাহি সুখেরো উদয়॥
সুহৃদ-ভঞ্জনো লোক-গঞ্জনো কলঙ্ক-ভাজনো হতে হয়॥...
অমিয় তেজে গরলে মোজে উপজে কি সুখো।
কলঙ্ক ঘোষণা জগতে, মরণো হতে অধিকো॥...
ত্যজিয়ে এ সুধারসো কেন বিষ ভখিবো, কলুষকূপে ডুবিব।
থাকিতে নয়নো অন্ধ যেই জনো, পেয়ে প্রেমধনো সে হারায়॥

and the ways of such a lover are ironically reproached:

তোমার চরিত, পথিক যেমত
হোয়ে শ্রান্তিযুত বিশ্রাম করে।
শ্রান্তি দূর হলে, যায় সেই চোলে
পুন নাহি চায় ফিরে॥

HARU ṬHĀKUR (1738-1812)

Haru Ṭhākur, however, the next great Kabiwālā, displays a variety and abundance of poetical accomplishment, and his work has fortunately come down to us in a comparatively large bulk. Hare Kṛṣṇa Dīrghāḍī or Dīrghāṅgī, popularly styled Haru Ṭhākur, the adjunct Ṭhākur having been added as a mark of respect, was a Brahman among Kabiwālās of generally inferior caste. He was born at Simla, Calcutta, in 1749 (1156 B. S.).[1] His father, Kalyāṇchandra[2] Dīrghāḍī

1 He died probably in 1814. See Bhabatosh Datta, ঈশ্বরচন্দ্র গুপ্ত রচিত কবিজীবনী, Calcutta 1958, p. 413.

2 Called Kālīchandra in *Baṅgabhāṣār Lekhak*, vol. i, p. 367; in *Gupta-ratnoddhār*, p. 10; in *Kabiwālādiger Gīt*, p. 64.

sent his son to the *pāṭhśālā* of one Bhairabchandra Sarkār, but his means were not sufficient to give his son a good education nor did the son seem eager enough to profit by his studies; for from his early years Haru betrayed a greater attachment to musical and poetical composition than to monotonous book-learning. When he was a mere boy, eleven years old, his father died; and Haru at once gave up his books and began an irregular life of indolent pleasure for some years. But he had a natural gift of song, and his irregular life had brought him into contact with a group of bohemians whom he gathered together and formed an amateur Kabi-party (*sakher dal*) under the acknowledged guidance of Raghunāth Dās in whose company Haru had obtained his preliminary training. It is through Raghunāth that Haru first began to be widely known and appreciated; and for Raghu, Haru Ṭhākur always cherished a deep feeling of respect and gratitude, a fact which is amply indicated by his generously putting his master's *bhaṇitā* to some of his own compositions. The story is told how Haru got fame and recognition for the first time by singing at the palace of Rājā Nabakṛṣṇa[1] of Śobhābazar (Calcutta), a great patron of letters of that time, and how the delighted Rājā having awarded him with a pair of shawls, the proud young man felt insulted at being treated like a needy professional Kabiwālā, and walked away throwing the royal gift on the head of his own *dhuli* (drummer). The Rājā, however, was a man of taste and discernment and had enough sense of humour to appreciate the uncommon behaviour of the young poet; and it was through the Rājā's advice and patronage, obtained so queerly, that Haru subsequently formed a professional party (*peśādārī dal*) although he always seemed averse to earning money by such a prostitution of his talents. Henceforth Kabi-song became his pro-

1 On Rājā Nabakṛṣṇa see N. N. Ghosh, *Raja Nabakissen Deb Bahadur*, Calcutta 1901.

fession and his fame spread far and wide. He died at the age of 74 in 1812.[1]

It is to be regretted that neither the songs of Haru Ṭhākur nor that of his rival Rām Basu have been collected or critically edited. Īśvar Gupta gave us (1854) for the first time the largest collection of 45 songs of Haru Thākur (though some of them are mere fragments) on the themes of *sakhī-saṃbād* and *biraha*. The *Kabiwālādiger Gīt-saṃgraha* (1862) merely reproduces 27 of these with the single addition of a new piece.[2] The *Gupta-ratnoddhār* (1894), again, the other anthology of Kabi-songs, gives us only 30 pieces all taken from Īśvar Gupta's collections. In *Prāchīn Kabi-saṃgraha* (1877), the number of Haru Thākur's songs is very limited, only 13 being given under his name; but of these 13 songs, five or six at least have been unanimously attributed in other collections to Rām Basu and one, so attributed to Rāsu and Nṛsiṃha,[3] is rightly or wrongly placed under Haru Thākur's name. In *Prīti-gīti*, the most extensive modern anthology of Bengali love-poems, there are 30 songs attributed to Haru Ṭhākur; but all of them (except two[4] which are apparently new but which are, however, mere fragments and do not add much to Haru's reputation) are to be found in other collections, and one of these[5] is universally attributed in other collections to Rām Basu and one, which is Haru's, is wrongly attributed to Bhabānī Baṇik.[6] Again, much uncertainty still remains, in spite of these efforts, as to the question of author-

1 *Nabyabhārat*, 1311, p. 605. But according to *Kabiwālādiger Gīt*, p. 66 and *Sāhitya Pariṣat Patrikā*, 1302, p. 384, following Īśvar Gupta (*Prabhākar*, Pous 1261) at the age of 75.

2 At p. 134. But it is sometimes attributed to Rām Basu.

3 At pp. 87-89.

4 At p. 119 and p. 397.

5 At p. 808.

6 At p. 613. The *Saṅgīt-sār-saṃgraha* and *Bāṅgālīr Gān* etc. give a selection of Kabi-songs ; but they are later and inferior collections apparently reproducing what is given in other special collections and are, therefore, not mentioned here.

ship of many of these songs, for there is absolutely no means for determining with absolute certainty the authorship of many a song variously attributed to various poets. What is true of Haru Ṭhākur is true of every other Kabiwālā ; and this one instance would sufficiently illustrate the nature and extent of the data one has got to handle in dealing with Kabi-poetry.

But a poor collection of 45 songs—all of them not of the best and some of them mere fragments—is but a sadly diminished legacy of the extraordinary reputation which Haru Ṭhākur always enjoyed as one of the greatest of the Kabiwālās. The songs which have come down to us mostly relate to either of the two themes of *biraha* and *sakhī-saṃbād* ; but if we are to rely upon the testimony of Īśvar Gupta who wrote only forty years after Haru Ṭhākur's death, we must admit that the great Kabiwālā could write with equal facility and power upon all the other recognised themes such as *āgamanī, bhabānī-biṣayak, lahar* and *kheuḍ*. On the first two of these divisions not a single composition of Haru has survived. Īśvar Gupta, again, tells us that Haru could compose best on the themes of *lahar*[1] and *kheuḍ*, but these songs, although much praised in their time for their ingenuity and verbal music, were hopelessly vitiated by bad taste and

1 If *Kheuḍ* is unquotable, *lahar* is nearly so. As the modern reader has no idea of what it is like we give here a specimen of a moderate type:

আমি মগধপতি জরাসন্ধ বটি হে কংসেরি শ্বশুর।
ওহে কংসের ভাগ্নে কৃষ্ণ তুমি নাতি আমার সম্বন্ধ মধুর॥
তোমার সঙ্গী দুটি পরিপাটী নামে ভীমার্জ্জুন,
কৃষ্ণ ভাল করে আজ আমারে দাও উহাদের পরিচয়।
উহার কোন্‌টি তোমার পিস্‌তুতো ভাই, কোন্‌টি ভগ্নীপতি হয়॥
ভদ্রঘরের মেয়ে বটে স্থভদ্রার বুদ্ধি ভাল নয়,
ওহে ভাইকে পতি করতে গেলে তোমার মত কে আর হয়?

It hardly requires any comment. This and *Kheuḍ* represents a phase of the Kabi-song over which the critic had better keep silence.

unredeemed coarseness, and can be dismissed with the just though severe comments of Īśvar Gupta himself which deserves quotation here : কিন্তু দুঃখের বিষয় এই যে অতি জঘন্য অতি ঘৃণিত অতি অশ্রাব্য অবাচ্য শব্দে পূরিত হইত, একারণ তাহা কোন প্রকারেই প্রকাশ করা বিধেয় নহে। যখন তাহার নাম করিতে হইলেই রাম বলিয়া ঘাম নির্গত করিতে হয়, ভূত প্রেত প্রভৃতি কর্ণে হস্ত দিয়া কোথায় প্রস্থান করে, তখন আমরা কি প্রকারে তাহা পত্রস্থ করিতে পারি। পূর্ব্বকার অতি প্রধান২ মহিমান্বিত অর্থাৎ মহারাজ কৃষ্ণচন্দ্র রায় বাহাদুর, নবকৃষ্ণ বাহাদুর প্রভৃতি উচ্চ লোকেরা এবম্ভূত অদ্ভুত সকার বকারে সন্তুষ্ট হইতেন, আমোদের পরিসীমা থাকিত না। জ্ঞাতি, কুটুম্ব, সজন, সজ্জন, পরিজনে পরিবেষ্টিত হইয়া গদগদচিত্তে শ্রবণ করিতেন।[1] It is no wonder, therefore, that these songs have all perished ; and time, the exorable judge and destroyer, has preserved to us only those songs on *biraha* and *sakhī-saṃbād* for which Haru Ṭhākur had been deservedly famous, which indicate, even in the fragmentary and inadequate specimens which have come down, considerable poetic power, and which cannot be, as they often are, summarily dismissed.

Even the obviously inadequate and insufficient specimens of Haru Ṭhākur's workmanship which have survived indicate that he had, even judged by strict standard, sufficient intelligence and poetic power, in larger or smaller, in clearer or more clouded shape, of writing songs and not mere congeries of verses. Considering the time and the circumstances, this must not be regarded as a very poor or mean praise. That there are obvious and not inconsiderable defects is true. The subject is often trite, the thought hackneyed or insignificant ; the poet lacks perfect expression and sustained utterance, is defective in rhyme or metre or other technical qualities, and has one of the superior charm and grace of the great Baiṣṇab poets. But the indefinable yet unmistakable poetic touch is always there.

1 *Saṃbād-prabhākar*, Pous 1, 1261, pp. 5-6.

HIS SONGS ON SAKHĪ-SAMBĀD AND BIRAHA

It is not possible with the space at our disposal, to give extensive quotations which alone would bring out the beauty of Haru Ṭhākur's songs. But most of these songs are justly included in the numerous anthologies of Bengali poetry. The best songs of Haru Ṭhākur, the merit of which it is impossible to underrate, more than justify themselves to any one who looks at poetry with just and catholic appreciation. To such a reader সইরে কই বিপিন-বিহারী বিনোদ আমার এলনা[1] is not a trifle, nor কদম্বতলে কেগো বংশী বাজায় nor সখিরে রসের আলসে গত দিবসেরো রজনীশেষে nor আমারে সখি ধরো ধরো ব্যথার ব্যথিত কে আছে আমারো nor আগে যদি প্রাণসখি জানিতাম nor কি কাজ আর ব্রজভুবনে nor many others. We have not space enough for lengthy quotations, but we shall select here two specimens (other than those mentioned) from his *sakhī-saṃbād*.[2]

শ্যাম তিলেক দাঁড়াও
হেরি চিকণ কাল বরণ। শ্যাম তিলেক দাঁড়াও।
এ অধিনীর মনের মানস পুরাও ॥
সাধ মম বহুদিনের, আজ পেয়েছি অঙ্গনে,
চন্দ্রাননে হাসি হাসি বাঁশিটি বাজাও ॥
নির্জনে এমন না পাব দরশন
যায় নিশি যাক্ জানুক গুরুজন।
তাহাতে নহি খেদিতো শুন ওহে ব্রজনাথো
ও বংশীরো গুণ কত বিশেষে শুনাও ॥
শ্যাম, শুন শুন যাও কেন রাখহে বচন।
তোমার বাঁশীর গান আমি করিব শ্রবণ ॥

1 Contains Haru Ṭhākur's master's (Raghu's) *bhaṇitā*: hence quoted as Raghu's in *Baṅga-sāhitya-parichay*, vol. ii, pp. 1548-49.

2 *Saṃbād-prabhākar*, Pous 1261; *Kabiwālādiger Gīt*, p. 88; *Gupta-ratnoddhār*, p. 60; *Saṅgīt-sār-saṃgraha*, p. 1038; also quoted in *Nabyabhārat*, 1311, p. 602.

কোন রন্ধ্রে পূরে ধ্বনি কুলবতীর মন
কুল সহিতে হে করিলে হরণ।
কোন রন্ধ্রে পূরে ধ্বনি রাধায় কর উদাসিনী
সাক্ষাতে বাজাও শুনি আমার মাথা খাও ॥

The other is a fine piece but it is sometimes attributed to Rām Basu.[1]

একি অকস্মাৎ বজ্রে বজ্রাঘাত কে আনিলো রথ গোকুলে।
অক্রূর সহিতে কেন তুমি রথে, বুঝি মথুরাতে চলিলে ॥
ইহাই কি তোমারি মনে ছিল হরি, ব্রজকুলনারী বধিলে।
বঞ্চনা কি বাদ সাধিলে ॥
শ্যাম, ভেবে দেখ মনে তোমারি কারণে ব্রজাঙ্গনাগণ উদাসী।
নাহি অন্য ভাবো শুন হে মাধবো তোমারি প্রেমের প্রয়াসী ॥
শ্যাম, নিশাভাগ নিশি যথা বাজে বাঁশি তথা আসি গোপী সকলে।
কিসে হলেম দোষী তা তোমায় জিজ্ঞাসী এই দোষে কিহে ত্যজিলে ॥
যদি চলিলে মুরারি ত্যেজে ব্রজপুরী ব্রজনারী কোথা রেখে যাও।
জীবন উপায় বলে দাও ॥
হে মধুসূদন, করি নিবেদন বদন তুলিয়ে কথা কও॥
শ্যাম, যাও মধুপুরী নিষেধ না করি থাক হরি যথা সুখ পাও।
একবার সহাস্যবদনে বঙ্কিমনয়নে ব্রজগোপীর পানে ফিরে চাও ॥
জনমের মত শ্রীচরণ দুটি হেরি হে নয়নে শ্রীহরি
আর হেরিব না আশা করি।

Haru Ṭhākur is certainly at his best in these songs on *sakhī-saṃbād*. His *biraha* songs, which at one time enjoyed great reputation and popularity, are certainly inferior in quality, as well as in bulk, not only to his *sakhī-saṃbād*

1 So attributed in *Nabyabhārat*, 1311, p. 476 and *Janmabhūmī* 1303-04, p. 303: but in all other collections from Īśvar Gupta downwards, it is assigned to Haru Ṭhākur. There are slight differences of reading in various collections. In some anthologies, the lines beginning with যদি চলিলে মুরারি are taken as constituting a separate song.

compositions but also to the *biraha* songs of his rival and contemporary Rām Basu. There is no peculiar charm nor characteristic feature which distinguishes these songs from similar compositions of other Kabiwālās except perhaps the fact that there is a sense of disappointment,[1] of embittered feeling,[2] of sarcastic gloominess[3] in tone and temper. We will, therefore, close this account with one short piece which, if not characteristically representative, will illustrate sufficiently Haru Ṭhākur's style and manner:

পীরিতি নাহি গোপনে থাকে।
শুনলো স্বজনি বলি তোমাকে ॥
শুনেছ কখনো জলন্ত আগুণো
বসনে বন্ধনো রাখে ॥
প্রতিপদের চাঁদো হরিষে বিষাদো
নয়নে না দেখে উদয় লেখে।
দ্বিতীয়ের চাঁদো কিঞ্চিতো প্রকাশো
তৃতীয়ের চাঁদো জগতে দেখে ॥

NITĀI BAIRĀGĪ (1751-1821)

Nityānanda-dās Bairāgī, popularly called Nitāi or Nite Bairāgī, younger than Haru Ṭhākur but much older than Rām Basu, was one of the famous and popular Kabiwālās of his time; but his fame rested more upon his sweet and melodious singing than upon his poetical composition. He

1 See, for instance, the song এতো দুখো অপমানো সাধেরো পীরিতে প্রাণো or ধিক্ ধিক্ তার জীবন যৌবন (already quoted under Raghunāth) or তোমার আশাতে এ চারিজন মোর মনো প্রাণো শ্রবণো নয়ন।

2 See, for instance, আর নারীরে করোনা প্রত্যয় (sometimes attributed to Rām Basu), যার স্বভাব যা থাকে প্রাণনাথ তা কি ঘুচাতে কেহ পারে or বুঝেছি মনেতে রমণীর প্রেম।

3 See, for instance, ওহে বার বার আর কেন জ্বালাও আমায়। or এই সদা ভয় মনেতে বিচ্ছেদো বা ঘটে পীরিতে।

was an expert singer rather than a good composer of words. Himself an unlettered man, he could hardly weave words into music; but one Gour Kabirāj, a native of Simla, Calcutta, and a Brahman named Nabāi Ṭhākur used to frame songs for him by which he won so much reputation. Gour Kabirāj[1] excelled in *biraha* and *kheuḍ*, while Nabāi Ṭhākur had more versatile gifts, although he is credited with excellence in his *sakhī-saṃbād*. It is difficult, however, to ascertain at this day what particular song was composed by this or that individual poet; and even half a century ago, Īśvar Gupta, no mean judge, who collected these songs only 33 years after Nitāi's death and had ampler materials than we now possess, confessed his inability to do so.[2] All songs, therefore, which were sung by his party now go by his name alone.

Nitāi was born at Chandannagar about 1751 (1158 B. S.)[3] in the house of one Kuñjadās Baiṣṇab and was brought up in Baiṣṇabism. Nothing, however, is known about details of his life, but his fame as a Kabiwālā at one time spread far and wide over the prosperous cities and villages on the two sides of the Hooghly. We read graphic accounts of the eagerness with which people used to come from a great distance to witness the sensational Kabi-fights between Nitāi and Bhabānī Baṇik, once his great rival.[4] But his profession not only brought him fame, it also brought him money; and we are told that he made good use of his fortune by spending it in erecting an Ākhḍā at Chinsurah and a temple at Chandannagar where all the great religious festivals were held

1 This Kabirāj also used to compose songs for other parties. Lakṣmīnārāyaṇ Jogī (Loke Jugī) and Nīlu Ṭhākur were among those whom he thus favoured. It has been already noted that one song which is often attributed to Nitāi bears the *bhaṇitā* of Rāmjī. This may indicate, if the song itself is not Rāmjī's, that the latter was one of the poetical preceptors of Nitāi.

2 In *Prāchīn Kabi-saṁgraha*, however, two songs are given with direct attribution to Nabāi Ṭhākur.

3 See *Saṃbād-prabhākar*, Agrahāyaṇ 1, 1261.

4 *Ibid.* loc. cit.

with pomp and splendour. In 1821,[1] while returning from the house of the Rājā of Kasimbazar where he had gone to sing during the Pūjā festival, he was attacked by illness which proved fatal, and he died in the same year at the great age of seventy. He had three sons Jagatchandra, Ramchandra and Premchandra each of whom inherited his father's profession, if not his talents, and formed Kabi-parties in later times; but no direct descendant of Nitāi is alive to-day.

Like Haru Ṭhākur whom Nitāi resembles so much in poetical character, Nitāi possessed not a small share of the gift of song-writing. He wrote chiefly on *sakhī-saṃbād* and *biraha*, and in both these he shows considerable power. Nitāi had none of Rām Basu's rhetorical tendency, finical nicety or straining after studied effects, and his songs possess not a little amount of unconscious freshness and beauty of tender sentiment and expression. Nitāi, however, like most of his compeers, is a very unequal poet; spasmodic bursts of fine lines and couplets go hand in hand with insipid and hardly tolerable verses. Himself a Baiṣṇab Bairāgī he, among the Kabiwālās, could more successfully imitate the inimitable Baiṣṇab lyrics ; but the imitation often involves a peculiar lack of judgment which makes him reproduce the heresies rather than the virtues of earlier poets. It is not necessary to give too many quotations, but the following selected extract as well as that given on p. 298-99 would illustrate his merits and defects.[2]

গমন সময়েতে কেঁদে গেল মুরারি ।
তাই ভাবি দিবা শর্ব্বরী ।।
জনমেরো মত রাধারে কাঁদালে
বুঝি ব্রজে আসিবেনা শ্রীহরি ।।
হরি কি আসিবে ব্রজে আর মনে সন্দেহ করি ।
যদি মধুপূরী হেসে যেতো হরি পুন আসিতো বংশীধারী ।।

1 1813 according to *Kabiwālādiger Gīt*, p. 110.
2 *Saṃbad-prabhākar*, Agrahāyaṇ 1261, p. 10.

হায়, ছুটি করে ধরি যখনো আমায় যাই যাই বঁধূ কয়।
তখনো শ্যামেরো কমলবদনো নয়নের জলে ভেসে যায়।।

Nitāi's *biraha* songs, again, which however are rather scantily handed down, are not altogether negligible, although they have none of the superior merit of Rām Basu's *biraha*. We select here two specimens.

প্রেয়সি তোমার প্রেমধার
আমি শুধিলে কি তাহা শুধিতে পারি।
তুমি যে ধনো খাতকে দিয়েছ করজো
পরিশোধে তাহা পরাণে মরি।।
মনো বাঁধা রেখে তোমারো স্থানে
লইলাম প্রেম করজো করি।
সে ধারো উদ্ধারো হইবে কেমনে
লাভে মূলে হল দ্বিগুণ ভারি।।[1]

পীরিতি নগরে বিষমো সখি মনো চোরেরো ভয়।
বসতি ইহাতে দায়।।
নয়নে নয়নে সন্ধানো মন অমনি হরিয়ে লয়।।[2]

RĀM BASU 1786-1828

Latest born of this group but intimately connected with Haru Ṭhākur in poetical rivalry, in superior reputation and also in the singularly unsympathetic criticism which has been lavished from time to time upon him, is Rām Basu. He was considerably younger than Haru and Nitāi—almost by forty-eight and thirty-five years respectively—having been born about 1786; but he survived Nitāi by seven years and died only a year before Haru Ṭhākur. His full name was Rām-mohan Basu, but he was widely and popularly known through the abbreviated form of his name, Rām Basu. His birth-

1 *Ibid* p. 9. *Gupta-ratnoddhār*, p. 198-9; *Kabiwālādiger Gīt*, p. 122.
2 *Ibid.* loc. cit.; *ibid*, p. 197; *ibid*, p. 121.

place was Sālkiā on the right bank of the Hooghly and his father's name was Rām Lochan Basu. Like most village-boy he was at first educated at the village *pāthśālā* and then at the age of twelve he was sent to Calcutta to his uncle's (father's sister's husband) house at Jorasanko for further education. But like Haru Ṭhākur, Rām Basu showed even in his early years a marked tendency towards poetical composition which made his ambitious father sorry, but which brought the young poet to the notice of the Kabiwālā Bhabānī Baṇik. Bhabānī's training and encouragement made Rām Basu realise very early the true bent of his talents. His father dying soon after this, Rām Basu had to give up his studies, and become a clerk in some mercantile office. But his poetical aptitudes proving too strong, he ultimately took up the profession of a Kabiwālā—a lucrative profession, however, in those days—as a regular means of livelihood. At first he continued to compose songs and sing for Bhabānī, later on for Nīlu Ṭhākur, Ṭhākurdās Siṃha and others; but in the end, a few years before his death, he formed a party of his own, at first amateur, eventually professional.

Of his character nothing definite is known, but Rām Basu does not seem to have been a man of ascetic or inelastic temper. He had enough simplicity and integrity of feeling which made him grateful for the joys of life but repentant when he had exceeded in enjoying them. Tradition speaks of his partiality for one Jajñeśvarī,[1] a songstress of Nīlu Ṭhākur's party, who was herself a Kabiwālā of some reputation in her time. But though he was himself not above reproach, he would still satirise with considerable frankness and sincerity the reckless young men of his time.[2] Indeed

1 Of Jajñeśvarī, no details are known ; one or two of her songs have survived which are noticeable. They will be found in *Baṅga-sāhitya-parichaya*. vol. ii ; also in other anthologies.

2 ঘরের ধন ফেলে প্রাণ পরের ধনকে আগুলে বেড়াও।
নাহি জান ঘর বাসা কি বসন্ত কি বরষা
সতীকে করে নিরাশা অসতীর আশা পুরাও ॥

Rām Basu's poems express, in the most vivid and distinct manner, the alternate or rather varying moods of a man of soft sensibilities, religious as well as sensual.

HIS SONGS ON SAKHĪ-SAMBĀD

Rām Basu's poems, which however have not come down in a more complete or more abundant form than Haru Ṭhākur's, divide themselves in three groups, *sakī-saṃbād, biraha* and *āgamanī*. In all these three departments of Kabi-poetry he is said to have excelled ; but the poems which have survived in each department do not display an equal degree of merit. His songs on *sakhī-saṃbād*, although placed by popular opinion in the same rank with Haru Ṭhākur's songs on the same theme, are certainly much inferior not only to those of his rival Haru but also, it seems, to those of Nitāi Bairāgī. Although there are some fine pieces[1], his songs on *sakhī-saṃbād* are marked by an atificiality of tone, by a considerable display of cheap ingenuity and sometimes by a vulgarity of tone and sentiment which very often mars his beautiful passages. We have quoted already one song of this type while illustrating the feebleness and inadequacy of Kabi-songs in reproducing the spirit and grace of earlier poetry. Rām Bāsu is often regarded as the greatest poet of this group: but he is at the same time the most unequal poet. Indeed, the songs of Rām Basu, in spite of their charm and appeal, illustrate very aptly the utmost capacity as well as the utmost limitation of Kabi-poetry in all its aspects. The merits and defects of these songs are alike very great. As on the one hand, we have, in some of them, considerable simplicity of style, directness of expression, vigorous use of the vernacular idiom, tenderness and human interest, so on the other, we have the almost cloying display of verbal or alliterative dexterity, the conscious elaboration of trivial

1 See, for instance, his song মান করে মান রাখতে পারিনে or বসন্তেরে সুধাও সখি etc.

themes or trite sentiment, the comparatively uninspired use of ornaments and conceits—the bane of a long-standing literary tradition—and a false and affected taste for the jingle of weakly and inharmonious phrases. Coming, as it does, at the end of this flourishing period of Kabi-poetry, Rām Basu's song at once represents the maturity as well as the decline of that species.

Taking, in the first instance, his songs on *sakhī-saṃbād* we find all these merits and defects amply set forth. We cannot but admit inferiority in tone, sentiment and expression as seen in lines like the following:

কর্ত্তে রাধার মান রক্ষে উভয় পক্ষে যেন মান রয়।
করে এ পক্ষে পক্ষপাত যে পক্ষে যাক্ রাধানাথ
জানি প্রেমপক্ষে শ্যাম আমার বিপক্ষে নয়॥

is a good specimen of verbal dexterity but it lacks in poetic expression. Then again note the racy, yet inferior note of the following:

শ্রীরাধায় বনে পরিহরি কোথা হে হরি।
লুকালে কি প্রাণ হরি ও প্রাণহরি।
এনে বনে কুল হরি, কে জানে বধিবে হরি,
হরি:ভয় কি মনে করি মরি বোলে হরি হরি।

or take even the following artificial and hardly inspiring lines at one time highly extolled as one of the best pieces of Rām Basu[1]:

জলে কি জলে কি দোলে দেখ গো সখি কি হেলে হিল্লোলেতে।
পারিনে স্থির নির্ণয় করিতে।
শ্যামলো কমলো ফুটেছে বুঝি নির্ম্মলো যমুনা জলেতে
নিত্তি নিত্তি লই এই যমুনার জল সখি
জল মধ্যে কি আজ একি দেখ দেখি॥

1 This song is generally given as Rām Basu's; but see *Baṅga-sāhitya-parichay*, vol. ii, p. 1152, where it is placed under Haru Ṭhākur's name.

জলে কি এমনো দেখেছ কখনো বল দেখি ওগো ললিতে ॥
সই দেখ দেখি শোভা কিসের আভা হেরি জলো মাঝেতে।
প্রস্ফুটিত তমালো বৃক্ষ যারো কালো ঐ ছায়া কি ইথে ॥
আরো সখি কালাচাঁদ কি আছে।
গগন মণ্ডলে কি পাতালে রয়েছে ॥
বল দেখি সখি কালাচাঁদ কি উদয় হয় দিবসেতে ॥

In his *sakhī-saṃbād*, if Rām Basu is not fantastic to frigidity, he is often insipid to dullness. If he does not disgust, he too often tries. It is very seldom that Rām Basu bursts forth into comparatively fine lines like the following:

ওগো চিনেছি চিনেছি চরণ দেখে
ঐ বটে সেই কালিয়ে।
চরণে চাঁদ ছাঁদ আছে দীপ্ত হয়ে।
সে চরণ ভজে ব্রজেতে আমায়
ডাকে কলঙ্কিনী বোলিয়ে।
ভুবনমোহন না দেখি এমন
ঐ বই
রূপ কি অপরূপ রসকূপ
আমারি সই।
কূলে শীলে কালি দিয়েছি আমি
কাল রূপ নয়নে হেরিয়ে ॥

HIS SONGS ON BIRAHA

The above remarks equally apply to his *biraha* songs. Listen to this fantastic and long-drawn-out complaint of a languishing maiden:

এ বসন্তে সখি পঞ্চ আমার কাল হলো জগতে।
করে পঞ্চ দুখে দাহ পঞ্চভূত দেহ পঞ্চত্ব বুঝি পাই পঞ্চবাণেতে ॥
পঞ্চ যাতনা প্রায় নিশি পঞ্চ প্রহরেতে।
যদি পঞ্চামৃত করি পান নাহি জুড়ায় প্রাণ হৃদয়ে বেঁধে পঞ্চবাণ।

দেখ পঞ্চানন তনু ভস্ম করেছিলেন যার
এখন সেই দহে দেহ পঞ্চশরেতে ॥
পঞ্চাক্ষর মকরধ্বজ বিরহি রাজ্যে রাজন
সহ সহচর পঞ্চশর রিপু হলো ভ্রমর কোকিলাদি পঞ্চজন ॥
রাজা পঞ্চশর অঙ্গে হানে পঞ্চশর
তাহে উনপঞ্চাশত মলয় মারুত সই
আবার ভানু দহে তনু পঞ্চযোগেতে ॥
সই গ্রহ প্রকাশিলে পঞ্চম মঙ্গল ফুলঘ্রাণ যেন পঞ্চবাণ ।
পঞ্চদশ দিনে হ্রাস বৃদ্ধি যার তার কিরণেও দহে প্রাণ ॥
পঞ্চম দ্বিগুণ বদন যার রাক্ষসের যে প্রধান
তার চিতা সম জ্বলছে সখি পঞ্চম দুখেতে প্রাণ ॥
যদি দ্বিপঞ্চ দিকেতে চাই পঞ্চরিপু পাই পঞ্চ সহকারী নাই ।
কেবল পঞ্চম অসাধ্যে পঞ্চ রিপুর মধ্যে
আমি থাকি যেন সখি পঞ্চ তপেতে ॥
সই পঞ্চপাণ্ডবেরা খাণ্ডবকানন জ্বালায়ে ছিল যেমন ।
তেমনি এ দেহ জ্বালায় সখি বসন্তের চর পঞ্চজন ॥
পঞ্চম দ্বিগুণ দ্বিগুণ করে করিতে চাহি ভক্ষণ ।
তাহে প্রতিবাদী হয়গো আসি প্রতিবাসী পঞ্চজন ॥
বলে পঞ্চ রিপু গিয়েছে প্রাণে সয়েছে এ পঞ্চ কদিন আছে
কিন্তু এ পঞ্চ যাতনা প্রাণে আর সহেনা
সই এবার পঞ্চ মিশায় বুঝি পঞ্চ ভাগেতে ॥

It is impossible to mistake the tendency of these lines to ingenuity and artificiality.

Indeed, this tendency towards an artificial rhetorical style, this weakness for frigid conceits and for studied effects are very marked throughout the songs of Rām Basu and debase not a little the true quality of his work. There is a good deal of genuine passion and emotion in his songs, but the artificial expression so often given to them makes them lose their proper appeal. The tricks of the artist are more apparent

than the passion of the poet. The *biraha* of Rām Basu is not the *biraha* of the Baiṣṇab poets with its passion and poignancy, nor is it the *biraha* of modern poets with its delicacy and refinement. It is too much of a verbal contest, of a frivolous and audacious linguistic strife of the *pragalbhā* heroine. The power of sarcasm is undoubted, but fierce banter, mawkish sentimentalism or piercing irony forms its essence ; and there is too much of "bite", of *ah* and *alas* of ostentatious distress to be at all touching, as in the following[1]:

যা হোক ভাল ভালবাসিলে।
খেয়ে আমার মাথা পরের কথায় পীরিৎ ভেঙ্গে পালালে॥
করে আমার উপর রাগ রাখলে যার সোহাগ
এখন তার আদরে তোমার আদর বাড়িল॥
তোমার পীরিতি কি রীতি হোল হে যেমন হংসী মুষীকেরি প্রায়।
হংসী প্রেমের দায় পাখা দিয়ে ঢাকে তায় সে পক্ষ কেটে পালায়॥
তোমার অন্তরে নাই একটু টান।
বল ভালবাসি সেটা কেবল দেঁতোর হাসি হাস প্রাণ॥

আমার যা হবার হলো প্রাণ ভাল দায়ে পড়েছে।
রাহুগ্রস্ত শশী যেমন তেমনি হয়েছে।
সন্ধিযোগে সে শশীর স্থিতি দণ্ড নয়।
সন্ধ্যা হোলে তোমার প্রাণ নিত্য গ্রহণ হয়।
সারানিশি সর্ব্বগ্রাসী দিনে চাঁদ মুখ বাহিরয়॥

আজি বিরহবাসরে নাথেরে ভেবে অন্তরে শরশয্যায় করিয়া শয়ন।
সংগ্রামে পাণ্ডবের হাতে ভীষ্মদেবের দশা যেমন।

আমার পতিরে বোলো দেশের ভূপতি বসন্ত।
যদি সে রৈল দেশান্তর, কে দিবে রাজার কর
হবে কি কোকিল-রবে প্রাণান্ত॥

1 All these specimens are taken from *Saṃbād-prabhākar*. Some of them are reproduced in *Saṅgīt-sār*, vol. ii.

সেত জানেনা ঋতু বসন্ত কেমন দুরন্ত।
অঙ্গে দে কর বলে দে কর।
বলি সর ওরে পঞ্চশর আমাদের ঘরেতে নাই ঘর॥
মদন যে করে করের তরে, এমন আর কে করে
ওরে সাধে কি কোরেছে শিব শাপান্ত॥
ভার্য্যে রেখে মদন রাজ্যে সই, কান্ত গেল দেশান্তর।
সজনি, দিবা রজনী বিরহে দহে কলেবর॥
আমার যেমন কপাল পোড়া
তেমনি সই হরকোপে ঐ অনঙ্গের সর্ব্বাঙ্গ পোড়া
মদন সেই পোড়ার ভয়েতে পুরুষকে ধরেনা সই
এসে কামিনীর কাছে হোলো কৃতান্ত॥

আমি সাধে কি বিষাদে রয়েছি।
কোরে না বুঝে লোভ শেষ পেয়ে ক্ষোভ
বলি কাকে চোখে দেখে ঠকেছি॥
যেমন মৎস্যমাংসভোগী হয়েছিল জম্বুকী
তুই কি আমার ভাগ্যে এখন সেইটে ঘটালি।
তোরে ভালবেসেছিলাম বোলে কিরে প্রাণ আমার দুকুল মজালি॥

আমার প্রাণনাথের স্বভাব ভাল নয়, কুটিল হৃদয় যেন বিষধর।
নিজ রসাভাসে দংশে এসে যদি সই জ্বলে মরব নিরন্তর॥

There is also sometimes a tendency to elaborate didactic or symbolical form of expression:[1]

1 *Prītigīti*, pp. 74-75; *Saṅgīt-sār-saṁgraha*, vol. ii, p. 1010. This didactic tendency the Kabiwālās probably got from the writers of the devotional songs, who from Rāmprasād downwards often indulged in this vein. Rām Basu very dexterously makes use of colloquial idiom, even of slang, but he sometimes carries the tendency to the extreme, *e.g.* 'অস্থি ভাজা ভাজা হলো প্রেমের দায়'। 'পিরীতি গেছে পাপ গেছে। হয়ে পরের পদানত চক্ষের জলে নিত্য যেত, যা হক বেনে এত দিনে গায়ে বাতাস লেগেছে। সুখের চেয়ে স্বস্তি ভাল ঘাম দে জ্বর ছেড়েছে॥' 'আমি এক আঁচড়ে পেলাম প্রেমের পরিচয়' etc.

প্রেম তরুতে সখি চারটি ফল ফলে ।
শুন ফলের নাম সুখ সৌখ্য মোক্ষ কাম
সুজনের সু কলঙ্ক কঠিনের কপালে ॥
গোড়া কেটে মরে কেউ আগায় জল ঢেলে,
চিনে মূল যে দিতে পারে জল
ঘটে তার ভাগ্যেতে প্রেমতরুর হাতে হাতে ফল ॥
তরু মনের রাগে বুড়িয়ে যায়
বিচ্ছেদ ছাগে মুড়িয়ে খায়
দেখো দেখো যত্নে রেখো, ফলবে না মূল শুকালে ॥
প্রেমবৃক্ষে দিয়ে আশানীর করতেছ সিঞ্চন
দেখ লো যেন হয় না শেষে বৃথা আকিঞ্চন ।
বেড়া দাও সই প্রবৃত্তি কণ্টকে
প্রেমঅঙ্কুরে আঘাত করে এম্নি পোড়া লোকে ।
যদি থাকে ফলের বাসনা বেশি জল দিয়ে জ্বালিও না
সময়ে একবিন্দু দিলে সুখসিন্ধু উথলে ॥

It is not necessary to multiply quotations which have already become too lengthy; but these aspects of Rām Basu's songs (in particular his *biraha* songs) have been so often ignored that critics have gone to the length of declaring that the songs in question, smart and ingenious though they are, are the most beautiful specimens of Kabi-song. Beautiful specimens Rām Basu's *biraha*-songs are, but they are such only when Rām Basu rises above these fatal faults and depends upon the strength of his natural poetic genius. It is very seldom that we find exquisite and spontaneous utterance in Rām Basu, but when we find them there is nothing better in the whole range of Kabi-poetry. Songs such as the following:

মনে রইল সই মনের বেদনা ।
প্রবাসে যখন যায় গো সে তারে বলি বলি বলা হল না ।
সরমে মরমের কথা কওয়া গেল না ॥

or

যৌবন জনমের মত যায়
সেত আসা পথ নাহি চায় ॥

or

দাঁড়াও দাঁড়াও দাঁড়াও প্রাণনাথ, বদন ঢেকে যেও না।
তোমায় ভালবাসি তাই চোখের দেখা দেখতে চাই
কিছু থাক থাক বলে ধরে রাখব না ॥

and many other fine things are often quoted and praised, and they deserve quotation and all the praise that have been bestowed upon them. They are too well-known to require comment or quotation again here, but one or two of the less well-known may perhaps be welcome here:

তোমার প্রেম হতে, প্রাণ, বিচ্ছেদ আমায় ভালবেসেছে।
প্রেম হল আর ফুরালো, চখে দেখতে দেখতে গেল,
জন্মের মত বিচ্ছেদ আমার অন্তরে পশেছে
কলহ নির্ব্বাহ হয়ে সন্দেহ মিটেছে ॥
তোমার প্রেমে সঁপে প্রাণ কেবল হল অপমান
সুখ হবে কি বল দেখি সাধতে গেল প্রাণ।
এ সব সুখের চেয়ে আমার স্বস্তি ভাল হে
সে সব সাধাসাধির দায়ে প্রাণ বেঁচেছে ॥
পরের ভালবাসা প্রেমের আশা সকলি আকাশ।
কোন সুখ দেখিনা শঠের প্রেমে দুঃখ বারমাস।
কেবল হাঁসায় আর কাঁদায় সদা প্রাণেতে জ্বালায়।
আজ নে তোলে সিংহাসনে কাল পথেতে বসায়।
পথে কেঁদে কেঁদে বেড়াই হয়ে আপনার ধনে আপনি চোর
সে সব প্রবৃত্তি এখন নিবৃত্তি হয়েছে ॥

প্রাণ, তুমি আপনার নহ আমার হবে কি।
মনে মনে মনাগুণে আমি জল্‌ব বই আর বল্‌ব কি।
অনেক দিনের আলাপ বোলে আদরে ডাকি।

কেমন আছ তুমি, প্রাণ, শুনি শ্রবণে।
প্রাণ গেলে, প্রাণ, নিজ দুঃখ তোমায় বলিনে।
ফলহীন বৃক্ষের কাছে সাধলে কাঁদলে ফল্‌বে কি॥

Rām Basu's *biraha* songs have been more than once criticised on the ground of its alleged immoral tendency.[1] There is no doubt, as we have pointed, too much of frivolity, grossness, vilification, audacity, smartness of repartee and pursuit of selfish pleasure in most of these songs, and that there is an indecorous laxity of expression, an improper looseness of style which debases the quality of these songs. But the point is too often ignored that what is expressed in these songs is not the love of the analytic and self-questioning artist or the refined rapture of the idealist but the love of the natural man with all the force and crudity of its natural passion. Love in these songs does not die in dreams nor is it troubled with a deep philosophy or bored with its own ideality, soaring into vague passion or indefinite pantheism. It is strong, naturalistic and direct, if also a little boisterous, unrefined and even gross. It is surely too much to bring in moral considerations for judgment upon this honest cry of erotic passion

যৌবন জনমের মত যায়
সেত আশাপথ নাহি চায়।
কি দিয়ে গো প্রাণসখি রাখিব উহায়॥
জীবন যৌবন গেলে আর
ফিরে নাহি আসে পুনর্ব্বার
বাঁচিতো বসন্ত পাব কান্ত পাব পুনরায়॥

or of

একে আমার এ যৌবনকাল তাতে কাল বসন্ত এল।
এ সময় প্রাণনাথ প্রবাসে গেল॥

1 Chandrasekhar Mukhopadhyay, *Sārasvat-kuñja* (essay on Rām Basu's *biraha*); also see Preface to *Rasa-bhāndār* by the same author.

যখন হাসি হাসি সে আসি বলে
সে হাসি দেখে ভাসি নয়নের জলে ॥
তারে পারি কি ছেড়ে দিতে মন চায় ধরিতে
লজ্জা বলে ছি ছি ধরো না ॥

Nor is it possible to underrate the palpitating humanity of the following oft-quoted lines which may be quoted again

বালিকা ছিলাম ভালো ছিলাম
সই ছিল না সুখ অভিলাষ ।
পতি চিন্‌তাম না ও রস জান্‌তেম না
হৃদ্‌পদ্ম ছিল অপ্রকাশ ॥
এখন সেই শতদল মুদিত কমল
কাল পেয়ে ফুটিল ॥

or

এই খেদ তারে চখে দেখে মরতে পেলাম না ।
আমায় চাক্‌ বা না চাক্‌ সদা সুখে থাক্‌
কেন দেখা দিয়ে একবার ফিরে গেল না ।
জীবনো থাকিতে প্রাণনাথ যদি নাহি এলো নিবাসে ।
লুব্ধ আশা দিয়ে সে কেন রইল প্রবাসে ॥

To condemn these expressions of the franker and simpler moods of the passion itself is unjust and canting prudery ; and the whole controversy over the question of moral tendency would seem to one to be a signal instance of the wrong thing in the wrong place. It is more than useless or irrelevant either to read austere morals into these poets or damn them for their want of morals. To anyone who can appreciate the *bonhomie* of Kabi-poetry, the songs remain and remain yet unsurpassed, inspite of its very direct plain-speaking (or coarseness if you will) according to modern standards, as the most frank expression of physical affection, of the exceedingly human, honest and natural passion of the man for the woman. The amatory fashion of the world passeth, but instead of undervaluing it or sneering at it when it is gone, let us

appreciate the reality, force and naturalness of human passion wherever and in whatever shape it may be found.

HIS ĀGAMANĪ-SONGS

The *āgamanī* songs of Rām Basu, even more than his *biraha* songs, have all along enjoyed a reputation never yet surpassed ; and this reputation they certainly deserve. The *sakhī-sambād* and *birahe* songs of other Kabiwālās may approach or challenge comparison with those of Rām Basu ; but in *āgamanī* Rām Basu is undoubtedly supreme[1]. The secret of his excellence in this respect lies in the fact that in most of these songs Rām Basu the poet and the man rises superior to Rām Basu the mere literary craftsman, and that sincerity, naturalness and simplicity constitute the essence of his charm. It is not the picture of ideal goodness, but the simple one of a Bengali mother and a daughter that we find in the Menakā and Umā of Rām Basu. We seem to hear the tender voice of our own mother, her anxious solicitude for her daughter, her weakness as well as strength of affection in lines like these

তারা-হারা হোয়ে নয়নের তারা হারা হোয়ে রই।
সদা কই উমা কই আমার প্রাণ উমা কৈ।
আমার সেই তারা-হারা ত্রিজতের সারা বিধি এনে মিলালে।
উমা চন্দ্রবদনে ডাক্‌ছে মা মা মা বোলে।
উমা যত হেসে কয় ওতো হাসি নয়
যেন অভাগীর কপালে অনল জ্বলে॥

Menakā has repeatedly implored her husband to bring back her daughter whom she has not seen for over a year ; but her husband being apparently apathetic, the neglected

1 A short comparative account of the *āgamanī* of Rām Basu, Kamalākānta and Dāśarathi Rāy will be found in *Bhāratbarṣa*, Kārtik 1325, p. 712. The earliest recorded Āgamanī song is that of Rāmprasād, and in this respect the Kabiwālās must have been considerably influenced by Rāmprasād, Kamalākānta and other writers of devotional songs.

daughter has come of herself, and the tender heart of the mother bursts forth in gentle reproach upon the ponderously indifferent father:

তবে নাকি উমার তত্ত্ব কোরে ছিলে।
গিরিরাজ ওহে শুন তোমার মেয়ে কি বলে॥
নারী প্রবোধিয়ে যেতে হে কৈলাসে যাই বোলে।
এসে বল্‌তে মেনকা তোমার দুঃখের কথা
    উমা সব শুনেছে।
তোমায় দেখতে পাষাণী আপনি ঈশানী আসতে চেয়েছে॥
তুমি গিয়েছিলে কই উমা বলে এই হে
আমি আপনি এসেছি জননী বলে॥

And nothing can be more forcible than this simple yet touching reproof:

ভাল হোক হোক্ ওহে গিরি।
যাই আমি নারী তাই ভুলি বচনে।
তোমারো কি মনে হোতো না হে সাধ
হেরিতে উমার চন্দ্রাননে॥

In most of the *āgamanī* songs of the Kabiwālās, the anxious mother dreams of her absent daughter. In Rām Basu the dreams are not bad or gloomy dreams but dreams of joyful anticipation or tender foreboding.

গতনিশি যোগে আমি দেখেছি হে স্বপন।
এলো সেই আমার তারাধন।
দাঁড়ায়ে দুয়ারে বলে মা কই মা কই মা কই আমার
দেখা দাও দুখিনীরে।
অমনি দুবাহু পশারি উমা কোলে করি
আনন্দেতে আমি আমি নয়॥

It is impossible to underrate the simplicity, tenderness and beauty of these lines. There is no touch of ornamental rhetoric, no artificiality, nor is there any refined rapture or

philosophic depth in these lines. What is daily observed and what is natural supply the essential ingredient of these songs; and if the test of poetic power be its capacity of making the common as though it were uncommon, then surely Rām Basu was a poet in the true sense of the term.

KABI-POETRY AFTER 1830

After enumerating these greater names, which citation however does not exhaust the poetical riches of this remarkable period, we come to the lesser poets who accompanied or came behind them. It is, however, not necessary for us to deal in detail with the history of Kabi-poetry after this period ; for after 1830, Kabi-poetry languished in the hands of the less inspired successors of Haru, Nitāi and Rām Basu. It continued even up to 1880[1] to be a very popular form of entertainment ; but it rapidly declined, if not in quantity, at least in quality. Of this belated group, we have Nīlu and Rāmprasād Ṭhākur[2], Anthony or Antonio the domiciled Portuguese songster[3], Ṭhākurdās Siṃha[4], Ṭhākurdās Chakra-

1 To what degraded state Kabi-poetry had descended by that time may be realised by reading the vehemently denouncing article on Kabi-poetry which appeared in *Bāndhab*, Pous 1282 (1875), p. 267.

2 Nīlmaṇi and Rāmprasād Chakrabartī lived at Simla, Calcutta. Nīlu was the younger of the two brothers. Several songs sung in their party are given in *Prāchīn Kabi-saṃgraha* at pp. 36, 43, 46, 72, 89 etc.

3 Anthony or Antony Firingi is said by Rajnarayan Basu in his *Ekāl O Sekāl* to be of French extraction. He lived at Gareṭi near Chandannagar and at one time his *Kabir dal* was very famous. He is said to have fallen in love with a Brahman woman whom he married and through whom he was converted into Hinduism. See for details Dinesh Chandra Sen, *Baṅga-bhāṣā O Sāhitya*, 3rd Ed., pp. 627-628, *Baṅga-sāhitya-parichay* (some of his songs quoted), p. 1576 ; *Nabyabhārat*, 1312, pp. 194-98 ; *Baṅger Kabitā*, pp. 318-22 ; *Baṅga-bhāṣār Lekhak*, pp. 375-377.

4 Not much is known about him but he was a contemporary and rival of Anthony. See *Nabyabhārat*, 1312, pp. 645-646. Rām Basu used to compose for his party ; see *Prāchīn Kabi-saṃgraha*, pp. 38, 40, 59, 68.

vartī[1], Thākurdās Dātta[2], and later on Gadādhar Mukhopādhyāy[3] and even Īśvar Gupta.[4] Rūpchāṁd Pakṣī[5] also obtained considerable reputation as a Kabiwālā or composer of Kabi-songs. But we also hear of a host of others—Nīlmaṇi Pāṭaṇi[6], Bholā Mayarā[7], Chintā Mayarā, Jagannāth Baṇik

1 Born in 1209 B. S. (1802 A. D.) in the district of Nadīyā. He never formed his own party but composed chiefly for Antony, Bholā, Balarām Baiṣṇab, Nīlmaṇi Pāṭani and Rāmsundar Svarṇakār. For details see *Nabyabhārat* 1312, pp. 641-48. Some of his songs are given in *Prāchīn Kabi-saṁgraha,* at pp. 23, 32, 37, 52, 73, 91 and in *Gupta-ratnoddhār*, pp. 261 f.

2 Born in 1207 (1800 A. D.) at Byāṭrā (ব্যাঁটড়া), Howrah. See *Nabyabhārat*, 1312, pp. 643-44 ; *Baṅga-bhāṣār Lekhak*, pp. 325-327.

3 Composed for the party of Rāmlochan Basāk of Joransanko, who was the rival of Mohan Chāṁd Basu. Also composed for Bholā, Nīlu Ṭhākur and Nīlu Pāṭani. See his songs quoted in *Prāchīn Kabi-saṃgraha* at pp. 21, 27, 36, 50, 64, 72, 89, 94, 115, 118, 121, 128, 130 etc. ; also in *Gupta-ratnoddhār*, pp. 213-247.

4 His Kabi-songs are quoted in *Gupta-ratnoddhār*, pp. 247-261 ; also a few in *Prāchīn Kabi-saṃgraha.*

5 Rūpchāṁd Dās, son of Gaurahari Dās Mahāpātra (originally of Orissa) was not really a Kabiwālā but formed his own party (পক্ষীর দল addicted to Gāñjā smoking !) for Baiṭakhī songs. He was born in 1818 ; the date of his death is not known. But he refers to Rukmā Bai abjuring her husband in July 20, 1888 A.D. (তোমরা নিউজ পেপার পড় নাই, পতি ত্যাগ করলে রুক্মা বাই, নূতন আইন হবে তাই ইণ্ডিয়ায় ॥). He shows the influence of Īśvar Gupta. His conservative attitude was against social changes. He wrote under the *bhaṇitā* of Pakṣī or Khagarāj. Some of his songs are collected together (but not critically) in বাঙ্গালীর গান, ed. Durgadas Lahiri, Bangabasi Press, Calcutta 1312 B.S. (=1905 A.D.).

6 Rām Basu, Gadādhar Mukhopādhyāy and various other poets composed for him. See *Prāchīn Kabi-saṃgraha,* pp. 27, 28, 64, etc. Some of his own songs are given in *Gupta-ratnoddhār*, pp. 208-9.

7 He was a sweetmeat-vendor at Bagbazar. He was a disciple of Haru Ṭhākur's. See, for details, *Bhāratī*, 1304, pp. 59-66 ; *Nabyabhārat,* 1314, pp. 67-73 ; *Baṅger Kabitā, loc. cit.* Some of the songs sung in his party are given in *Prāchīn Kabi-saṃgraha* at pp. 21, 37, 50, 67 etc. Jagannāth Baṇik was his rival.

Uddhaba-dās, Lakṣmīkānta or Lakṣmīnārāyaṇ Jogī (Loke Jugī), Gorakṣanāth,[1] Guro Dumbo,[2] Bhīmdās Mālākar, Balarām Dās Kāpālī,[3] Rāmsundar Śvarṇakār,[4] Mati Paśārī, Hosain Khān,[5] Parāṇdās and Udaydās, Kāṇā Maheś,[6] Mohanchāṁd Basu[7], Rāmānanda Nandī[8], Kṛṣṇamohan Bhaṭṭāchārya,[9] Jaynārāyaṇ Bandyopādhyāy, Rājkiśor Bandyopādhyāy,[10] Sātu Rāy[11] and Manomohan Basu.[12] It is not

1 Gorakṣanāth was a "composer" of Antony's party but subsequently quarrelled with him and formed his own party (see *Nabyabhārat*, 1312, pp. 194-198 ; *ibid*, 1313, pp. 577-78). Rāmānanda Nandī was one of his rivals, Gorakṣanāth's songs are given in *Gupta-ratnoddhār*, pp. 294-296 ; and in *Prāchīn Kabisaṃgraha*, pp. 43, 70, 110 etc.

2 *Prāchīn Kabi-saṃgraha*, p. 66.

3 Lived in Chandannagar. His daughter's son Kṛṣṇadās was a Kabiwālā. The *Prāchīn Kabi-saṃgraha* gives some songs sung in his party but they are not of his own composition.

4 Was a clerk in some office but subsequently became a Kabiwālā. He lived at Hāḍkāṭā Gully, Calcutta. Sereral songs sung in his party will be found in *Prāchīn Kabi-saṃgraha*.

5 Was the founder of *Tarjā*. Moti Paśārī was his rival.

6 His name was Maheś Chandra Ghoṣ, a Kāyastha. He was born blind ; hence the nickname. For details see *Nabyabhārat*, 1313, pp. 203-207.

7 Was the founder of Hap-ākhḍāi Kabi. His special creation was the মোহনসাহী সুর. See preface to *Manomohan Gītābalī* and Rāmnidhi Gupta's *Gīta-ratna*. He was a disciple of Nidhu Babu's who however was not a Kabiwālā. Also see preface to *Prāchīn Kabi-saṃgraha*.

8 Was a disciple of Nitāi Bairāgī. For details see *Nabyabhārat*, 1313, pp. 575-579.

9 His songs are given in *Prāchīn Kabi-saṃgraha*, and in a collected form in *Gupta-ratnoddhār*, pp. 281-293.

10 The songs of Jayanārāyaṇ and Rājkiśor are given in *Prāchīn Kabi-saṃgraha* ; also in *Gupta-ratnoddhār* at pp. 264-269.

11 For details about his life etc., see *Nabyabhārat*, 1314, pp. 65-67; *Baṅga-bhāṣār Lekhak*, pp. 379-80. His songs are given in *Gupta-ratnoddhār* at pp. 275-279.

12 Was quite a "modern." Not a Kabiwālā strictly speaking but

possible nor desirable to enumerate all the names; but the extraordinary fertility and popularity of this poetry will be sufficiently indicated by the list of names already cited. It is, however, like the swarming of flies in the afternoon lethargy and fatigue of a glorious day. There is, no doubt, occasional sprinkling of good verses, as well as a general diffusion of the poetic spirit, thinned and diluted it may be in course of time; but taken as a whole the later poetry is merely imitative and reproductive of the earlier and does not reward patient and detailed study. Not much of it can bear very well the beauty-truth test implied in the famous line of Keats. Nor is there material enough to trace their systematic history in this period. In tone and temper as well as in poetic expression it declined considerably; and with the advent of *Hāp-ākhḍāi* first set in fashion by Mohanchāṁd Basu[1] and of *Tarjā* popularised by Hosain Khān, the form itself as well as the spirit went through striking changes. These songsters, no doubt, kept up and still keep up the indigenous trend in poetry, but in themselves they never reach that high level of literary excellence which would make them worthy of the attention of posterity. It is, therefore, not necessary to drag these inferior poets and their poems from their deserved obscurity or devote tedious pages to their comparatively uninspiring annals.

composed for Kabi, Hāp-akhḍāi and Pāñchāli. See *Manomohan Gitābalī* for his songs.

1 For a history of this see *Saṃbād-prabhākar*, Agrahāyaṇ 8, 1261. and preface to *Manmohan Gītābalī*.

CHAPTER XI

LOVE-LYRIC AND DEVOTIONAL SONGS

LYRIC INTERVAL BETWEEN 1760-1830

Leaving aside the new prose-writing, the period of Bengali literature between 1760 and 1830 may not unfitly be described as a lyrical interval in which a multitude of productions, varied grave and gay dittties, *kabi, ṭappā, yātrā, pāñchāli, dhap, kīrtan, bāul,* devotional songs and exquisite bits of love-songs, were pouring upon the literary world a flood of delicious harmony. There is, no doubt, a sprinkling of narrative and descriptive verse of the more serious type, but barring this, every poet was a natural vocalist and never there was a time when little songs were more abundant. Although carelessly fashioned, these charming little things possess all the attributes of a successful song and seem to be alive with the energy of music. Even the most insignificant person in this group of latter-day poets had a constant tendency to break unawares into singing and catch the spirit of melody which seemed to be in the air.

WRITERS OF ṬAPPĀ SONGS: ṬAPPA ITS CHARACTERISTIC QUALITY AND IMPORTANCE

One specific and important phase of this song-literature is represented by Ṭappā-writers who possess this vocal quality in no mean degree; but to many a modern reader the exact signification of the term *ṭappā* seems to have been lost. A *ṭappā* is generally taken to be a melodious trifle, a savoury little lyric of the erotic type in which eroticism connotes wanton or ribald sensuality. *Ṭappā*, however, is a technical term which denotes, like *dhrupad* and *kheyāl,* a specific mode or style of musical composition, lighter, briefer yet more variegated. Etymologically derived from a Hindi word which

means 'tripping' or 'frisking about' with the light fantastic toe, a Ṭappā means a little song of a light nature.[1] It is more condensed than *dhrupad* and *kheyāl*, having only *āsthāyi* and *antarā*, and certainly more lively. Being essentially a specific style of musical composition, songs of all sorts, erotic, devotional or otherwise, may be composed in this style; but it was suited by its very nature for lighter love-songs, and in Bengali at least it had established itself peculiarly and principally for that purpose. As its name implies and its history shows, the Ṭappā was not indigenous but it was imported from abroad. It deals with the "minor facts" of art unable by its form and nature to compass the "major": but it has a distinct value as an entirely novel mode of art and as a protest against the conventional literary tradition.

A NEW TREND IN SONG-LITERATURE

When Nidhu began to sing—and Nidhu Bābu is the earliest important ṭappā-writer of whom we have any record —we have, on the one hand, the dictatorship of Bhāratchandra and Rāmprasād, and on the other, the flourishing period of Kabi-poetry and other forms of popular literature. If the date of Bhāratchandra's death be 1760 and that of Rāmprasād a few years later, Rāmnidhi Gupta must have been at that time a young man of nineteen or twenty; and the influence of Bhāratchandra and Rāmprasād existed

1 See Jogesh Chandra Ray, *Bāṅgālā Śabda-koṣa* under *ṭappā*. In *Saṅgīt-tānsen* (1299 B.S., pp. 66-69) two styles of musical composition are mentioned—*Dhrupad* and *Raṅgīn gān* ; under *dhrupad* there are 24 varieties while *Raṅgīn gān* is of 50 kinds. *Kheyāl* and *Ṭappā* are said to be varieties of the latter class. In *Saṅgīt-rāg-kalpadrum* by Kṛṣṇānanda Byās (Sāhitya Pariṣat ed. 1916, vol. III, p. 294), Nidhu Bābu's Ṭappās are comprised under *Bāṅgālā Raṅgīn Gān*. Ṭappā, unlike Kabi, Pañchāli or Yātrā, was essentially *Baiṭhakī gān* (or songs for the drawing room) which was appreciated chiefly, if not wholly, by the upper classes.

widely throughout this period even down to the middle of the 19th century. On the other hand, all the earliest Kabiwālās and Pāñchālikārs were Nidhu Bābu's contemporaries, for the latter lived up to 1838. Nidhu Bābu, therefore, and most of the Ṭappā-writers who followed him were born and bred up in the midst of the conventional literary tradition which these two characteristic phases of contemporary literature represented. But Nidhu Bābu followed neither of these beaten paths; he struck out into an entirely novel and original line. With the examples of Bhāratchandra's *Bidyāsundar* and of Rāmprasād's devotional songs on the one hand, not to speak of the isolated imitations of still earlier styles, and with Kabi-gān and other forms of popular literature, on the other, Rāmnidhi chose to inaugurate a new type of love-songs in Bengali, in imitation of Hindi *ṭappā* and *kheyāl*, no doubt, but with a considerable indication of an original vein.

ASSERTION OF THE PERSONAL ELEMENT

The characteristic charm and value of these Ṭappās lies in the fact that they are spontaneous and free. They are not hampered by time-honoured conventions nor do they pay any homage to established schools and forms of art. They speak of love, no doubt, an eternally engaging theme with poets of all times, but they do not speak of Bidyā and Sundar nor of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa. The poet looks into his own heart and writes; he sings of his own feelings, his own joys and sorrows, his own triumph and defeat; he does not seek the conventional epic or narrative framework for the expression of what he thinks and feels, nor does he take refuge under the cloak of *parakīya-bhāb* which earlier poets thought essential. Ancient literature was mostly objective, if not always narrative and epic; the inward feeling seldom or never out-tops the outward vision; and whatever the poet speaks of himself he expresses through his suitable mouth-pieces. With the Ṭappā-writers came an outburst of the personal element, an overflow of sensibility, an enfranchisement

of the passion and the imagination. The sense of the difficulty and complexity of modern problems is, no doubt, absent in them, nor do they possess the finish and refinement of modern lyrics, yet the Ţappā-writers foreshadow in their own way that instrospective element which has since developed itself in such great measure—some think out of all measure—in modern poetry.

NOVEL BUT NOT ENTIRELY MODERN

The Ţappā-writers, therefore, possess originality in an epoch in which nothing of great value was being produced in poetry; they attempt simple and natural, though not colloquial, diction and write with an easy and careless vigour; they are truthful to nature and avoid frigid conventionality and classicality. But they had as much of the new spirit as their readers were then fit for; and though their work contained the seeds of the impending change of taste, it is an absurdity to represent them as thoroughly revolutionary or entirely "modern". Regarded from the standpoint of form, their songs incline more to the old than to the new. They wrote with ease and naturalness, no doubt, but the varying measures and melodies of the coming age were not for them. In ideas and general tone also they did not venture to go beyond certain limits. They preserve in a degree the old posture and the old manner; but in spirit and temper, if not in anything else, they herald the new age. The contrast between them and writers like Jaynārāyaṇ Ghoṣāl, who was almost contemporaneous, will exhibit the whole difference between the old and the new poetical instincts. They were, therefore, like intermediaries between the old and the new poets and, although casting a lingering look behind, they stand at the threshold of the new age of poetry.

RĀMNIDHI GUPTA

Rāmnidhi Gupta (or simply and endearingly Nidhu Bābu) was the earliest and by far the most important writer of this

group. There was a time when people went into ecstasies over Nidhu Bābu's songs and singing. It is not clear whether Nidhu Bābu was the first dealer in this new species or whether it was he who introduced it into Bengali; but the extraordinary power which he displayed and the enormous popularity he enjoyed justify the high eulogy bestowed upon him by his glorious nickname "the Śori Miñā of Bengal." As a result of the capricious instability of changing taste, Nidhu Bābu's songs are sometimes severely deprecated to-day and seldom read; yet from the artistic as well as historical standpoint, these neglected songs, it must be admitted, possess considerable value and importance.[1]

HIS LIFE AND CHARACTER

Rāmnidhi Gupta was born in 1741 A. D. (1148 B. S.) in the house of Rāmjay Kabirāj, maternal uncle of his father at the village of Chāmptā near Tribeṇī[2]. His father Hari Nārāyaṇ Kabirāj lived at Kumārtulī in Calcutta where Nidhu's descendants are said still to reside. Nidhu came with his father to Calcutta in 1747 where he learnt Sanskrit and Persian and also a bit of English from a missionary[3]. Through the efforts of his neighbour Rāmtanu Pālit, dewān of Chhāprā Collectorate, he obtained[4] in 1776 the situation of a clerk in the same office where he continued for eighteen years. He gave up the post through a difference of opinion with his official superior Jaganmohan Mukhopādhyāy, who had succeeded

1 On Rāmnidhi Gupta and his work see S. K. De, *Nānā Nibandha*, Calcutta 1957, pp. 104-130 ; Bhabatosh Datta in *Sāhitya Parishat Patrikā* mentioned below.

2 These biographical details are gathered from various sources but chiefly from the account written by Īśvar Gupta in his *Saṃbād-prabhākar* (Śrābaṇ 1261 B.S.), from which is compiled also the life prefixed to the 3rd edition of Nidhu Bābu's *Gīta-ratna*, published in 1257 B.S.

3 *Nārāyaṇ*, Jyaiṣṭha 1323, p. 739.

4 *Journal of the Bengal Academy of Literature*, vol. i (1893), no. 6, p. 4.

Rāmtanu in the office of the dewān, and returned to Calcutta in 1795. While residing in Chhāprā, Nidhu used to learn the theory and practice of music from an expert Muhammedan musician, but on finding after some time that the master was unwilling to impart his knowledge to such a quick-witted disciple he gave up Muhammedan music and himself began to compose Bengali songs on the pattern of Hindi *ṭappās*. On the successive death of his wives he married thrice in 1761, in 1771 and in 1797 or 1798. By his first wife he had a son who died early ; but by his third wife he had four sons and two daughters, of whom the eldest son and daughter and the youngest died in his life time. He lived almost for a century and died at the advanced age of 97 in 1838 (B. S. 1245, 21st Chaitra)[1].

During the time he lived in Calcutta he obtained considerable popularity by his music and his song[2]. A big shed was erected at Baṭtalā, Śobhābazar, where Nidhu used to sing every night before an appreciative assembly of the rich and the élite of Calcutta ; subsequently the sitting was shifted to the house of Rasikchāṁd Gosvāmī of Bāgbazar. Nidhu Bābu was never a professional singer ; but he was eagerly sought for and respected by the higher social circles of the city. Though himself only an amateur and not a Kabiwālā, it was chiefly through his efforts that in 1212-13 B. S. a "reformed" Ākhḍāi party was established in Calcutta. Mohan Chāṁd Basu of Bāgbazar, who first introduced Hāp-ākhḍāi and set

1 But the *Friend of India* (April 11, 1838) states that he died at the age of 80. For more details, see S. K. De in *Sāhitya Pariṣat Patrikā*, 1324, pp. 108-110. Also see Bhabatosh Datta in the same journal, vol. 63, p. 190. His second son Jaygopāl Gupta edited the 2nd and 3rd ed. of the *Gīta-ratna* after Rāmnidhi's death. The families of this son and of the youngest Sukhamay are said to exist still.

2 That Nidhu Bābu was an expert musician and that the musical quality of his songs was of a very high order is indicated by the fact that Kṛṣṇānanda included nearly 150 songs of Nidhu Bābu in his cyclopaedia of Indian songs. In any estimate of Nidhu Bābu's Ṭappās, this feature cannot be ignored.

the tide against the fashion of Kabi and Ākhḍāi, first learnt the new style from Nidhu Bābu whom he always respected as his master[1]. We also learn that Nidhu was a man of grave and sedate character but of contented and cheerful disposition. There were rumours about his partiality for one Śrīmatī, a mistress of Mahārājā Mahānanda of Murshidabad; but his biographers[2] take pains to show that this was nothing more than the intimate feeling of cordial friendship[3]. Nevertheless many of his love songs were inspired by her and composed in her honour.

HIS GĪTA-RATNA GRANTHA

An accurate and exhaustive collection of Nidhu Bābu's Ṭappās has not yet been published. A year before his death was published his *Gīta-ratna Grantha*[4], which purported to be a complete collection of his songs. It contains a preface in which the author states his intention of publishing a correct edition of his songs which had circulated in various forms. A revised edition of this work with a short sketch of Nidhu Bābu's life (compiled chiefly from *Saṃbād-prabhākar*) was published in 1868 by his son Jaygopāl Gupta. This edition does not differ materially from the first; the only additions

1 Prefatory life in *Gīta-ratna*: also *Saṃbād-prabhākar, loc. cit.* But see preface to *Manomohan Gītābalī*.

2 Prefatory life in *Gīta-ratna*; *Saṃbād-prabhākar*, Śrabaṇ 1, 1261.

3 The stories relating to Śrīmatī and Nidhu Bābu given in *Nārāyaṇ loc. cit.* are mere gossipy fables taken from a cheap ill-authenticated Baṭtalā publication, which was first brought to the notice of the present writer by Basantarañjan Rāy of the Sāhitya Pariṣat.

4 It contains vi + 141 pages, of which pp. 1-8 in the copy possessed by the Sāhitya Pariṣat Library are wanting. The title-page says: শ্রীশ্রীরামঃ ।। শরণং। গীতরত্ন গ্রন্থ শ্রীরামনিধি গুপ্ত রচিত গৌড়িয় সাধুভাষায় নানা প্রকার ছন্দে রাগরাগিনী সহিত শঙ্কোলিত হইয়া সন ১২৪৪ (=1838 A.D.) শালে কলিকাতা বিদ্বন্মোদ প্রেষে মুদ্রিত হইল ।। এই পুস্তক শোভাবাজার ৺নন্দরাম সেনের ইষ্টিটে নং ২০ বাটিতে অন্বেষণ করিলে পাইবেন। 2nd ed. 1263; 3rd ed. 1275 B.S.

take the form of 7 *ākhḍāi* songs, one *brahma-saṅgīt*, one *śyāmā-biṣayak gīt* and one *bāṇī-bandanā*. There are numerous inferior editions[1], and various anthologies were published in later times; but the two editions mentioned are the most authentic sources of Nidhu Bābu's songs. But even in *Gīta-ratna*, songs are given of which the authorship is uncertain; and it cannot be, at least, in any way taken as a complete and exhaustive collection of the songs of Nidhu Bābu[2]. Some songs, for instance, which are given here are also to be found in Tārācharaṇ Dās's *Manmatha-kābya* (1247 B.S), Banwārī Lāl's *Yojana-gandhā* or Munsi Erādot's *Kuraṅga-bhānu* (1252 B.S.), although it cannot be definitely determined whether these are cases of unacknowledged appro-

1 In 1252 B.S. (1845) Kṛṣṇānanda Byās Rāgasāgar in his encyclopaedic anthology, *Saṅgīt-rāga-kalpadrum*, gives a collection of Bengali songs in which he includes more than 150 Ṭappās of Nidhu Bābu mostly taken from *Gīta-ratna* and arranged almost in the same order. In 1257 B.S.(1850) an edition (marked as 3rd edition) of *Gītā-ratna* was published from Baṭtalā, but it contains numerous doubtful songs taken from other sources, the genuineness of which however is extremely questionable. In 1293 (1886) was published *Baṅgīya Saṅgīt-ratnamālā* or *Kabibar Nidhu Bābur Gītābalī*, a very uncritical collection compiled by Asutosh Ghoshal (from 55 College Street, Hindu Library, Calcutta). It contains about 160 songs; but in order to make the collection attractive, songs from different sources are passed off as Nidhu Bābu's. The same remarks apply also to the more recent edition (2nd Ed. 1303) of Nidhu Bābu's songs published by Baiṣṇab Charaṇ Basāk from Baṭtalā, entitled *Gītābalī* or *Nidhu Bābur* (*Rāmnidhi Gupter*) *Yābatīya Gīta-saṃgraha*. Besides these, selections from Nidhu Bābu's songs are given in the numerous anthologies of Bengali songs and poems such as *Saṅgīt-sār-saṃgraha* (Baṅgabāsī edition 1306) vol. ii; *Rasa-bhāndar* edited by Chandra Sekhar Mukhopadhyay (Basumatī office, 1306); *Bāṅgālīr Gān* (Baṅgabāsī); *Prīti-gīti*, edited by Abinas Chandra Ghosh; *Baṅga Sāhitya-parīchay*, edited by Dinesh Chandra Sen, etc. But the songs in these anthologies are often indiscriminately selected from various sources (besides *Gīta-ratna*) and are very unreliable from the standpoint of critical scholarship.

2 This question has been discussed in some detail in *Sāhitya Pariṣat Patrikā* (1324, pp. 103-107).

priation by subsequent authors. On the other hand, the famous song ভালবাসিবে বলে ভালবাসিনে। আমার স্বভাব এই তোমা বই আর জানিনে[1] is attributed successively to Śrīdhar Kathak, Rām Basu and Nidhu Bābu and is not included in *Gīta-ratna*. Such celebrated songs as the following: নয়নেরে দোষ কেন। আঁখি কি মজাতে পারে না হলে মন-মিলন ॥[2] or তোমারি তুলনা তুমি প্রাণ এ মহীমণ্ডলে। or তবে প্রেমে কি সুখ হত। আমি যারে ভালবাসি সে যদি ভালবাসিত ॥[3] always attributed by tradition and by different editors to Nidhu Bābu are omitted in *Gīta-ratna*[4]. This will indicate not only the uncertainty of authorship which bears upon many of these songs, but it will also probably demonstrate that the *Gīta-ratna* does not exhaust all the songs of this prolific song-writer. Nevertheless, published during his life time and directly under his authority and supervision, the *Gīta-ratna* must be taken as the original and the most authentic and reliable collection of Nidhu Bābu's songs.

1 *Saṅgītsār-saṃgraha*, p. 875 ; *Prīti-gīti*, pp. 153-154.

2 *Ibid*, p. 851, *Ibid*, p. 127 ; *Rasa-bhāndār*, p. 107.

3 *Prīti-gīti*, p. 376 ; *Nidhu Bābur Gītābalī*, p. 172. According to others, it was composed by Śrīdhar Kathak.

4 In *Saṅgīt-rāg-kalpadrūm* and among the additional songs in the third edition of *Gīta-ratna* (p. 148), the curious song beginning with ককারে আকার জর ছাড়ি লয়ে বল দীর্ঘ ঈকার is given as Nidhu Bābu's ; but it was composed by Ananda Narayan Ghosh, author of *Gītābalī*, as the *bhaṇitā* আনন্দের নিবেদন মন দিয়া শুন মন would clearly indicate. Similarly in *Baṅgīya-saṅgīt-ratnamālā*, the song headed পিরীতি পরম রতন and attributed to Nidhu Bābu is to be found in Michael Madhusūdan's *Padmābatī*. In the Baṭtalā editon (*Nidhu Babur Gītābalī*) as well as in Anath Krishna Deb's *Baṅger Kabitā* the song তোমার বিরহ সয়ে বাঁচি যদি দেখা হবে is assigned to Nidhu Bābu ; but its author is Jagannāth Prasād Basu Mallik, and it is omitted in *Gīta-ratna* (see *Prīti-gīti*, p. 461).

CHARACTERISTIC QUALITY OF NIDHU BĀBU'S ṬAPPĀS

To many a modern reader Nidhu Bābu is known by only his name and reputation; his Ṭappās are very seldom read or sung and are often condemned without being read or sung. Writing only sixteen years after Nidhu Bābu's death, Īśvar Gupta says: অনেকেই 'নিধু' 'নিধু' কহেন, কিন্তু নিধু শব্দটি কি, অর্থাৎ এই নিধু কি গীতের নাম, কি স্বরের নাম, কি রাগের নাম, কি মানুষের নাম, কি কি? তাহা জ্ঞাত নহেন। The established reputation of many a bygone songster has, no doubt, been swept away by capricious change of taste; but the chief ground for assigning Nidhu Bābu's works to obscurity and oblivion is said by unjust and ignorant criticism to be its alleged immoral tendency. Kailas Chandra Ghosh in his pamphlet on *Bengali Literature* (1885) mechanically echoed this opinion when he wrote 'ইহাঁর অধিকাংশ গীতই অশ্লীলতা দুষ্ট', and Chandrasekhar Mukhopadhyay is not less severe or unjust when he rejected these songs as vulgar expression of sensual passion which, to quote his words, is 'আত্মবিসর্জ্জনে পরাঙ্মুখ, আত্মোৎসর্গে কুণ্ঠিত, ভোগবিলাসে কলুষিত, আত্মসুখান্বেষণে অপবিত্র'.[1] It cannot be denied indeed that there is a tendency, in these old-time songsters of seasoning their songs with indelicacies and audacities of expression which were sometimes very enjoyable to their audience; but what we have already said on the moral tendency of the Kabiwālās in general and of Rām Basu's *biraha* in particular applies to a certain extent to the present question. The whole controversy over the alleged morality or immorality of these songs appeared to be somewhat irrelevant or futile. We must take them for what they are worth and guard at

1 In the same strain Haraprasad Sastri speaks of Nidhu Bābu's *ṭappās* as নীচশ্রেণীর কবিতার করতোপ; and even a critic like Bankim Chandra could not resist the temptation of having a fling at them in his *Biṣa-bṛkṣa*.

once against reading rigid morals into them or condemning them for want of morals. In the first place, we need recall what Bankim Chandra said with regard to similar allegation on Īśvar Gupta's poetry ('তখন লোকে কিছু মোটা কাজ ভালবাসিত ; এখন সরুর উপর লোকের অনুরাগ') ; and this distinction between gross and fine workmanship is essential and lies at the very root of certain definite aspects of ancient and modern Bengali literature. Inspite of all its faults this gross workmanship has one great advantage, namely, that if it is savage, uncouth and grotesque it is at the same time trenchant, vivid and full of nervous and muscular energy. Polished or refined embroidery has its charm, no doubt, but it is also factitious and artificial. It lacks the tone of easy, genuine and natural passion; it is something *soi-disant*, insipid and incomplete. It may be a matter of taste whether a man prefers jagged angularity to harmonious roundness; but what is angular, what is gross, what is grotesque is nearer life in its primal sensations and in its terrible sincerity. It is like the ore fresh from the mines with all its dust and dross yet pure and unalloyed. In the songs of the Kabiwālās and in the Ṭappās of Nidhu Bābu, we enjoy these rugged sensations of the natural man, if you will, who regards his passions as their own excuse for being, and does not pretend to domesticate them or present them under an ideal glamour.

INTENSE REALISM OF PASSION

These poets were, therefore, in a sense realists or interpreters of real and natural emotions; and their songs are in the legitimate tradition of nature, although not always acceptable to the refined palate of the literary taster. It would, however, be absurd at the same time to suppose that these songs do not possess any touch of that idealism without which no poetry is poetry; they have enough of idealism but they do not deal with abstractions or live upon the air. Take, for instance, the intense realism of their idea of love. It is not

extramundane, volatile and vague, losing itself in the worship of a phantom-woman or rising into mystic spirituality and indefinite pantheism ; nor is it sicklied over with the subtleties of decadent psychologists or with the subjective malady of modern love-poets. It is exasperatingly impressionist and admirably plain-speaking. These poets realised, as every true passionate poet has realised, that passion in its essence is not idealism which looks beyond the real but idolatry which finds the ideal in the real; for passion is primarily and essentially realistic. It cannot live upon abstractions and generalisations; it must have actualities to feed upon. It is not our purpose to consider here whether this idolatrous intoxication of passion is good or bad; but it cannot be denied that it bore ample fruit in the astonishing realism of their love-songs, and brought their poetry nearer to world and life and to the actual and abiding spirit of love.

NOT OFFENSIVE OR IMMORAL

Love is conceived, therefore, in its concrete richness and variety, and not merely under its broad and ideal aspects. This essential realism of passion leads the poet to take body and soul together and not accept the one for the other. He is therefore always strong, vivid and honest, very seldom dreamy, ethereal or mystic. A sort of traditionary ill-repute, however, has very unduly got itself associated with the Ṭappās, especially with the exquisite bits of Nidhu Bābu's songs. There is a good deal of frankness and a passionate sense of the good things of life, it is true; but even judged by very strict standard, his songs are neither indecent nor offensive nor immoral.[1] The tone is always proper, and although there is the unmistakable directness of passion and the plain humanity of their *motifs*, there is absolutely nothing which should drive critics into such strong opinions of condemnation. Even

1 An attempt has been made by the present writer to analyse Nidhu Bābu's love-songs and show that they are not sensual and vulgar in *Nānā Nibandha*, pp. 118 f.

during his life-time and ever since his death. Nidhu's Ṭappās obtained such extraordinary popularity and currency that even low and vulgar doggerels have passed off as his own. His *Gīta-ratna* has never since been reprinted, and his Ṭappās to-day are seldom favoured; the modern reader, therefore, understands by Nidhu's Ṭappās the cheap and worthless street-songs which are sold in the name of Nidhu. It is no wonder, therefore, that his songs are taken as synonymous with *kheuḍ* and bad taste. In reality, however, no Ṭappā is more tender and exquisite than the Ṭappā of Nidhu.

MERITS AND IMPERFECTIONS OF NIDHU BĀBU'S ṬAPPĀS

There is not much of artistic workmanship in Nidhu Bābu's songs; but there is lucidity as well as flavour in his poetical style, and tenderness and emotional force in his expression. There is no elaboration or fineness, no verbal dexterity, no prosodic variety or profusion of conceits and ornaments. The poet is absolutely indifferent with regard to his rhymes which are often faulty, nor is he studiously fastidious with regard to word-selection which is not often impeceable. There are very few songs which taken as a whole are invulnerable in form or artistic requirements; and like most of the Kabiwālās he is singularly unequal, often great in single lines, in couplets, in 'patches,' but devoid of the gift of sustained utterance. Lines or verses like these taken at random:

উদয় সুখতারা আমার নয়নতারা তার পথ নিরখিয়ে
কারণ না জানি আমি আছি কি রসে ভুলিয়ে ।
নিশি হয় অবসান যেরূপ করিছে প্রাণ
কাহারে কহিব বল তাহারে কে কবে গিয়ে ॥[1]

হরিষ বিষাদ দুই বিচ্ছেদ মিলন
দুয়ের বাহিরে রাখে সেজন এমন ॥[2]

1 *Gīta-ratna*, 3rd ed., p. 130. 2 *Ibid*, p. 119.

নয়নে নয়নে রাখি অনিমিখ হয় আঁখি
পলক পড়িলে আমি হই অতি দুখী
কি জানি অন্তর হও অই ভয় দেখি ৷৷[1]

সাধিলে করিব মান কত মনে করি
দেখিলে তাহার মুখ তখনি পাসরি ॥[2]

থাকিতে বাসনা যার চন্দন বনে
ভুজঙ্গেরে ভয় সেহ করে কি কখনে ৷৷[3]

মিলন কি সুখময় হৃদয়ে উদয় হল
ধরিয়া দুঃখের হাত বিচ্ছেদ চলিল ॥[4]

সে আদর আদর যে আদর
অধর কম্পে কহিতে।
দরশনে পরশনে অমিয় বচনে
পরাণ শ্রবণ সুখী আঁখির সহিতে ॥[5]

আর কি দিব তোমারে সঁপিয়াছি মন
মনের অধিক আর আছে কি রতন ৷৷[6]

হেরিলে হরিষচিত না হেরিলে মরি
কেমনে এমন জনে রহিব পাসরি ৷৷[7]

বিচ্ছেদে যে ক্ষতি তাহা অধিক মিলনে
আঁখির কি আশা পুরে ক্ষণ দরশনে ৷৷[8]

কিবা দিবা বিভাবরী পাসরিতে নাহি পারি
আঁখি অনিমিখ পথ হেরিতে হেরিতে ॥[9]

1 *Ibid*, p. 79.
2 *Ibid*, p. 100.
3 *Ibid*, p. 132.
4 *Ibid*, p. 20.
5 *Ibid*, p. 137.
6 *Ibid*, p. 44.
7 *Ibid*, p. 41.
8 *Ibid*, p. 12.
9 *Ibid*, p. 9.

are examples of undoubtedly fine but spasmodic bursts of the miraculous gift; but, excepting a few which are flawless gems in form and substance, his verse often stumbles and halts where there is need for a brisk and sustained pace.

THEIR TRUE POETIC QUALITY

But Nidhu Bābu was undoubtedly a poet of high natural endowments, and the untutored feelings and passions of his heart he could express with unparalleled terseness and precision of touch. The rarest poetic feeling is oftener found in simpler verse than in an elaborate and studied masterpiece. The best and most characteristic of Nidhu Bābu's songs are love-songs; but the limited subject of his verse never matters much, for in them he sometimes reaches a variety and a simple yet fine quality. His oft-quoted songs:

নয়নেরে দোষ কেন।
মনেরে বুঝায়ে বল নয়নেরে দোষ কেন।
আঁখি কি মজাতে পারে না হলে মনমিলন ।।
আঁখিতে যে যত হেরে সকলি কি মনে ধরে
যেই যাকে মনে করে সেই তার মনোরঞ্জন ।।[1]

তারে ভুলিব কেমনে।
প্রাণ সঁপিয়াছি যারে আপন জেনে ।।
আর কি সে রূপ ভুলি প্রেম তুলি করে তুলি
হৃদয়ে রেখেছি লিখে অতি যতনে।
সবাই বলে আমারে সে ভুলেছে ভুল তারে
সে দিন ভুলিব তারে যে দিন লবে শমনে ।।[2]

1 Omitted in *Gīta-ratna*, but given as Nidhu Bābu's in *Prīti-gīti*, p. 154; *Saṅgīt-sār-saṃgraha*, vol. ii. p. 875; *Rasa-bhāndār*, p. 107.

2 Omitted in *Gīta-ratna* but given in *Gītābalī* or *Nidhu Bābur Gīta-saṃgraha*, p. 131; *Rasa-bhāndār*, p. 106. In *Prīti-gīti* the song is attributed to Harimohan Rāy.

or even some of his less known pieces:

কে ও যায় চাহিতে চাহিতে
ধীর গমন অতি হাসিতে হাসিতে।
যতক্ষণ যায় দেখা না পারি সরিতে
আঁখি মোর অনিমিক হেরিতে হেরিতে ।।[1]

আনন্দ ভর করি দাঁড়াইয়ে সুন্দরী হেরিতে মনোরঞ্জনে।
নয়নে মনসংযোগ নাহিক ভয় গঞ্জনে ।।
প্রতি অঙ্গ পুলকিত মুখপদ্ম প্রফুল্লিত
স্থির করি আছে দেখ দুই নয়নখঞ্জনে ।।[2]

না হতে পতন তরু দহন হইল আগে
আমার এ অনুতাপ তারে যেন নাহি লাগে ।।
চিতে চিতা সাজাইয়ে তাহে দুখতৃণ দিয়ে
আপনি হইব দগ্ধ আপনারি অনুরাগে ।।[3]

বিচ্ছেদেতে যায় প্রাণ না পারি রাখিতে
কাতর নয়ন মনে লাগিল কহিতে।
শুনি মন করে ধ্যান প্রাণেরে বাঁচাতে
চাক্ষুষ বিহীনে নাহি উপায় ইহাতে ।।[4]

are fine instances of what he was capable of achieving at his best; and his best is not something to be lightly spoken of.

RĀDHĀ MOHAN SEN AND HIS SAṄGĪT-TARAṄGA

Nidhu Bābu in the preface to his *Gīta-ratna* states that his book is not the first of its kind in Bengali; to what other works of the same nature he refers cannot be determined, but we know for certain the existence of a collection of songs by Rādhāmohan Sen, a Kāyastha musician who lived at Kānsāri-

1 *Gīta-ratna* p. 87.
2 *Ibid*, p. 87.
3 *Saṅgīt-sār-saṃgraha*, vol. ii, p. 850; omitted in *Gīta-ratna*.
5 *Gīta-ratna*, p. 21.

pāḍā, Calcutta, and who published his *Saṅgīt-taraṅga*[1] in 1818 (1275 B. S.). This work, however, is an elaborate treatise on music with the description of various Rāgas and Rāgiṇīs and is in no way directly concerned with our enquiry. It contains, however, about 123 songs subsequently collected together and published with some additional pieces in the author's later work *Rasa-sāra-saṅgīt* (1839). These songs, though very popular at one time, are not all Ṭappās nor do they exhibit any marked literary characteristies.[2] His short piece[3]

মনের কথা, সই, এমন অরি ।
না কহিলে মরি, তাহা কহিলেও মরি ।
যদি না চাহি কহিতে চাহি গোপনে রাখিতে
দহে হৃদি অনলের তেজ সে ধরি ।।
কিঞ্চিৎ কহিতে যার কি কব যাতনা তার
রসনা দহিয়া যায় বল কি করি ।।[4]

is so much better than the rest that it would be hardly fair to quote anything else unless we could quote a good deal more.

1 There is a copy of the first edition in the Sāhitya Pariṣat Library bearing this title-page : সঙ্গীত তরঙ্গ । ভাষাগ্রন্থ । শ্রীরাধামোহন সেন দাস । কৃত । কলিকাতায় বাঙ্গালি । প্রেসে । বাঙ্গালা বর্ণযন্ত্রে । ছাপা হইল সন ১২২৫। ১৭৪০ শক । pp. contents + 1-267. Another edition in 1256 B.S. by his grandson Adinath Sen Das. A good edition of this work has been published by the Baṅgabāsī Office and edited by Harimohan Mukhopadhyay in 1310 B.S. (1903 A.D.), which also includes additional songs from *Rasa-sāra-saṅgīt*.

2 His আমি নারী, হর নহি, শুনহে মদন । বিনা অপরাধে বধ রাধার জীবন ।। etc. is often praised, but is chiefly imitative of Jayadeva's হৃদিবিষলতাহারো নায়ং ভুজঙ্গমনায়কঃ, of Bidyāpati's কতিহু মদন তনু দহসি হমারি । হাম নহুঁ শঙ্কর হুঁ বরনারী and of Rām Basu's হর নই হে, আমি যুবতী, কেন জ্বালাতে এলে রতিপতি । The idea is conventional.

3 Besides the Baṅgabāsī edition, the *Prīti-gīti* gives a good selection of Rādhāmohan's noticeable pieces.

4 *Saṅgīt-taraṅga* (Baṅgabāsī edition), p. 20.

MINOR SONG-WRITERS

The minor lyrists and songsters in this section are not always, strictly speaking, writers of Ṭappās; but they wrote on amatory, devotional and other themes. It is unprofitable to take them in detail; for none of them, not even Śrīdhar Kathak or Kālī Mirjā, could approach Nidhu Bābu in variety, extent or power, though all of them show more or less a touch of the natural vocal quality. Their songs (excepting perhaps some deservedly popular pieces of Śrīdhar) do not possess the rare merit of uniting the grace and imagery of the lyric with the music and fashion of song. They are hardly literary and are often carelessly made: they are not meant to be read with tone and feeling but really demand to be sung. And what has been said with regard to the musical quality of the songs of the Kabiwālās apply with greater force to Ṭappā-writers who were primarily musicians.

ŚRĪDHAR KATHAK

Of these later Ṭappā-writers, Śrīdhar Kathak stands next to Nidhu Bābu in popularity, poetic merit and probably in chronology. Information about his life and character is uncertain, indefinite and mostly unreliable. He was born in the village of Bānsbeḍia, Hooghly, probably in 1816 (1223 B. S.). His father was Paṇḍit Ratankṛṣṇa Śiromaṇi, and his grandfather was the famous Kathak Lālchāṁd Bidyābhūṣan. Śrīdhar himself was a Kathak of considerable power, having learnt the art from Kālīcharaṇ Bhaṭṭāchāryya of Berhampore, but from his youth he was attached by natural proclivity to Kabi and Pāñchāli parties. The songs which are now attributed to Śrīdhar are, however, all of the Ṭappā type and for these he is justly celebrated. Unfortunately the rival reputation Rāmnidhi has created much confusion and led to the general attribution of many of Śrīdhar's songs to Rāmnidhi, and it is almost impossible to-day to disentangle satisfactorily this question of disputed authorship. The

famous song

ভালবাসিবে বলে ভালবাসিনে ।
আমার স্বভাব এই তোমা বই আর জানিনে ।।
বিধুমুখে মধুর হাসি দেখ্‌তে বড় ভালবাসি
তাই শুধু দেখিতে আসি দেখা দিতে আসিনে ।।

is popularly assigned to Nidhu Bābu, for none but Nidhu Bābu was supposed capable of producing such a beautiful piece; but the song really belongs to Śrīdhar and is not included in Nidhu Bābu's *Gīta-ratna*. The same remark applies to two other fine songs which deserve to be quoted here:

ঐ যায়, যায়, চায় ফিরে সজল নয়নে
ফিরাও গো, ফিরাও গো ওরে অমিয়-বচনে ।
হেরি ওর অভিমান দূরে গেল মোর মান
অস্থির হতেছে প্রাণ প্রতি পদার্পণে ।।

তবে প্রেমে কি সুখ হতো ।
আমি যারে ভালবাসি সে যদি ভালবাসিতো ।
কিংশুক শোভিত ঘ্রাণে কেতকী কণ্টক হীনে
ফুল ফুটিত চন্দনে ইক্ষুতে ফল ফলিতো ।
প্রেমসাগরেরি জল হত যদি সুশীতল
বিচ্ছেদ বাড়বানল তাহে যদি না থাকিতো ।।

The number of Śrīdhar's songs which have come down to us is very limited, and not more than one hundred songs may be found attributed to him in different anthologies.[1]

1 In *Baṅga-bhāṣār Lekhak* (vol. i, p. 360) mention is made of 169 songs by Śrīdhar: love-songs 121, songs on Kṛṣṇa and Rādhā 35, Śyāmā-biṣayak 4, Gaurī-biṣayak 9, besides some miscellaneous Padas. But these have not yet been published. Altogether nearly a hundred songs will be found assigned to Śrīdhar in different anthologies and selections.

HIS QUALITY AS A SONG-WRITER

Śrīdhar is undoubtedly one of the finest Ṭappā-writers of this period, although he moves within a very limited range. Most of his songs speak of the bitterness of disappointed love and breathe a note of tender passion marked more or less by absence of rhetorical subtlety and presence of lyrical directness. Śrīdhar, like most of his contemporaries, is often slipshod and careless; but he is always forceful and direct. His faults are faults common to the group—of too rapid composition, diffuseness and a certain share of the tricks and mannerisms of current verse; yet when he beats his music out, it has a touching and tender quality. In his best songs the words are few, but the linked sweetness of his long-drawn-out melody has a charm of its own. We have quoted some of his well-known songs; here are two from his less known pieces:

আমার মনোবেদনা কভু জানাওনা তায়
শুনিলে আমার দুঃখ সে পাছে বেদনা পায়।
না বাসে না বাসে ভাল ভাল থাকে সেই ভাল
শুনিলে মঙ্গল তার তবুও প্রাণ জুড়ায় ।।

যাবত জীবন রবে কারে ভালবাসিব না
ভালবেসে এই হলো ভালবাসার কি লাঞ্ছনা।
আমি ভালবাসি যারে সে কভু ভাবে না মোরে
তবে কেন তারি তরে নিয়ত পাই এ যন্ত্রণা।
ভালবাসা ভুলে যাব মনেরে বুঝাইব
পৃথিবীতে আর যেন কেউ কারে ভালবাসে না ।।[1]

It is impossible to overrate the quality displayed in the above passages; and one can, therefore, understand easily how Śrīdhar's songs got so curiously mixed up with Nidhu Bābu's masterpieces. But, inspite of this extraordinary charm, Śrīdhar is a singularly unequal poet and shines best in a volume of selection.

1 In *Prema-hār* (a collection of love-songs) ed. Kshirod Chandra Ray (1886), pp. 94-95 the text of this song has a slightly different wording.

KĀLIDĀS CHAṬṬOPADHYAY (KĀLĪ MIRJĀ)

We pass briefly over the name of Kālidās Chaṭṭopādhyāy (better known as Kālī Mirjā), a Ṭappā-writer of tolerable power and musician of great repute, who flourished in the early years of the 19th century. His songs, both for their substance and their music, had obtained such instant and merited currency that when Kṛṣṇānanda Byās Rāgasāgar compiled his enormous cyclopædia of songs in 1845 (1252 B.S.),[1] he thought it fit to include more than 250 songs of Kālī Mirjā's composition. He was the son of one Bijayrām Chaṭṭopādhyāy, a native of Guptipāḍā which was at one time the seat of Hindu learning. Kālidās is said to have learnt music in Benares, Luknow and Delhi; and his appellation *mirjā* is said to betoken his high skill and proficiency in that art. After residing for some time with Pratāpchandra of Burdwan, he came to Calcutta where he lived thereafter under the magnificent patronage of Gopīmohan Ṭhākur. He passed his last days in the sacred city of Benares and died there, before 1825.

Kālī Mirjā composed songs on a variety of topics, secular as well as religious, of which his *ṭappās* and *śyāmā-biṣayak* songs obtained considerable reputation. In his devotional songs, he follows the tradition of Rāmprasād, and in one or two pieces he has been able to catch the spirit, if not the devotional ecstasy, of the earlier devotee:

আরে মন তুই মজে যারে কালীপদ-সুধারসে
চতুর্ব্বর্গ ফল পাবি মুক্ত হবি ভব-পাশে ।
চরণ-কমল-দ্বন্দ্ব হও তাহে মকরন্দ
ত্যজ আর অন্য ধন্দ, কালী কালী সুখের ভাষে ।।

1 The entire work, *Saṅgīt-rāga-kalpadrum*, was published between 1842 and 1849 ; the volume containing Bengali songs was printed in 1845. The date given in the introductory portion of Kālī Mirjā's *Gīta-laharī*, published by Amritalal Bandyopadhyay in 1904, is incorrect. See preface to *Saṅgīt-rāga-kalpadrum* (Sāhitya Pariṣat edition, vol. iii, p. 2).

শবাসনার কি বাসনা আমারে এ প্রবঞ্চনা
কালি কালি যত ডাকি তত কর বিড়ম্বনা।
যতই ভাবি অন্তরে ততই হও অন্তরে
দিতে চাই গো মন তোরে, মন মনে থাকে না ॥[1]

The same level and quality also characterise his songs on Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa and his Ṭappās. His songs are uniformly pedestrian, if not always flat and dull, and monotonously destitute of the peculiar touch of phrasing, the eternising influence of style which characterises the songs of Nidhu Bābu or Śrīdhar Kathak. The only feature—a feature however which is hardly engaging—is his tendency towards the traditional rhetorical style and his fondness for tasteless conceits and crude devices of punning and alliteration. There is more of conventional poetical imagery than of natural emotion in his songs. One illustration would suffice: [2]

অন্তরে অন্তর তারে করিব কেমনে সই।
মনে নাহি মনে করে তাহার মন্তর বই।
যদি হয় কথান্তর নাহি হয় মতান্তর
আঁখি ঝরে নিরন্তর যদি তুরন্তর হই ॥

LATER GROUP OF ṬAPPĀ-WRITERS

This brings us practically to the end of the group of Ṭappā-writers[3] who chronologically belong to our period, although in matters of date and chronology we are not on absolutely firm and safe ground. The tradition, however, was carried on beyond the middle of the 19th century. In *Saṅgīt-rāga-kalpadrum*, published in 1845, we find the songs of Kālidās Gaṅgopādhyāy, Śibchandra Sarkār, Śib Chandra Rāy,

1 *Gīta-laharī*, pp. 56 and 64.

2 *Ibid*, p. 102.

3 Gopāl Uḍe does not properly belong to this group of *Baiṭhaki* Ṭappā-writers. He was a Yātrāwālā ; and although his songs go by the name of *Ṭappā*, in quality and kind they belong to a different species.

Ānanda Nārāyaṇ Ghoṣ and Āśutoṣ Deb (Chhātu Bābu), all of whom must have flourished in their poetical glory between 1820 and 1840. Later on we get Jagannāth Prasād Basu Mallik of Āndul; Kāśī Prasād Ghoṣ of Simlā, Calcutta, author of *Gītābalī* and of a large number of English lyrics; Jadunāth Ghoṣ of Belur, who wrote *Saṅgīt Manorañjan*; Ramāpati Bandyopādhyāy, author of *Saṅgīt-mūlādarśa*; Hari Mohan Rāy; Rām Chānd Bandyopādhyāy, Dayāl Chānd Mitra and a host of others. This minor poetry is of a strangely composite character vacillating between the fine poetic quality of Nidhu Bābu and the dull flatness of Kālī Mirjā.

DEVOTIONAL SONGS

It would be convenient to notice here briefly the devotional songs of this period, which, though dealing as they do with an entirely different theme and forming a group by themselves, represent a phase of song-writing of this period closely connected with the writing of the passionate love-lyrics. From individualistic and secular love-songs to the ecstatic and personal expression of religious longing is but a step, the intermediate stage being supplied by the songs bearing upon the personal-impersonal theme of the loves of Kṛṣṇa and Rādhā. But it is remarkable that while Ṭappā-writers like Nidhu Bābu, Śrīdhar Kathak or Kālī Mirjā often pass on from love-songs to devotional songs, the writers of devotional songs like Rāmprasād or Kamalākānta, on the other hand, seldom condescend to the more mundane theme of personal love-lyrics.

SONGS ON ŚAKTI-WORSHIP; RĀMPRASĀD

The most interesting bulk of these devotional songs relates to the worship of divinity under the special image of Śakti, although there are several songs which relate to other religious cults. Its origin must be traced to the recrudescence and ultimate domination of the Śakti-cult and Śākta form of

literature in the 18th century, which in its turn traced its origin in general to the earlier Tāntric form of worship. Rāmprasād, the greatest exponent of this kind of song-writing of this period, began his career as the author of the conventional *Bidyā-sundar* ; but even through the erotic atmosphere of this half-secular narrative poem, the devotional fervour of the Śākta-worshipper expresses itself. The same may be said, although in a lesser degree, of Bhāratchandra who was also the author of a few devotional Śākta lyrics. But when Rāmprasād later on realised the superiority of his ecstatic religious effusions as something more congenial to the trend of his life and genius, and burst forth even in the pages of his more studied and literary narrative poem

গ্রন্থ যাবে গড়াগড়ি গানে হব ব্যস্ত

the literary world began to be flooded with the tuneful melodies of religious ecstasy as a reaction from the comparatively arid thraldom of conventional verse.

ADORATION OF THE GODHEAD AS THE MOTHER

The conflict between the Śākta and the Baiṣṇab sects obtains in Bengali literature from time immemorial. As on the one hand the Baiṣṇab poets, steeped in the speculative, mystic and emotional realisations of the *Śrīmad-bhāgavat*, were giving a poetic shape of their religious longings in terms of human passion and emotion and figuring forth the divinity as an ideal of love, the Śāktas, on the other hand, were singing the praise and describing the glory of Ādyā Śakti through their *Chaṇḍi-maṅgal* poems. Regarded as literary ventures, these longer and more studied efforts of the Śākta writers, no doubt, hold a conspicuous place in ancient Bengali literature, but the Śāktas could not attain the lyric predominance and passionate enthusiasm of Baiṣṇab song-writers. There is a better scope for losing oneself in poetic rapture in dealing with *bātsalya*, *sakhya*, *dāsya*, *mādhurya* and other familiar

and daily felt emotional states than in describing in a sober narrative form the feats and glories of the particular deity. The Tantras, no doubt, inculcate the worship of the deity under the image of the Mother ; but no votary of the cult before Rāmprasād realised the exceedingly poetic possibilities of this form of adoration. We cannot indeed definitely state whether Rāmprasād was the first poet and devotee to realise this ; for we find contemporaneously with him a host of such song-writers as, either independently or influenced by him, wrote in the same strain. Rāja Kṛṣṇachandra himself was a composer of such songs, and we find the literary tradition maintained in the royal family by his two sons Śibchandra and Śambhuchandra, as well as by inferior members of the same family like Narachandra, Śrīśchandra, Nareśchandra and others. A few songs of this style still remains which contain the *bhaṇitā* of Māhārājā Nanda Kumār. It cannot be said that all these song-writers were inspired by the example and influence of Rāmprasād ; on the contrary, they might be following a course of religious and literary development which had begun independently but which was made resplendent by the superior faith and genius of Rāmprasād. Whatever might be the fact, it cannot be denied that it is in Rāmprasād that this new form of adoration of the Supreme Being under the image of the Mother—a form naturally congenial to the Bengali temperament—finds its characteristic expression. The image of divine motherhood, to Rāmprasād and his followers, is not a mere abstract symbol of divine grace or divine chastisement, but it becomes the means as well as the end of a definite spiritual realisation. Rising to the radiant white-heat of childlikeness, these poets realise in the emotions of the child the emotions of a devotee. Like the child, the poet is now grave, now gay, now petulant, now despairing, not with the capricious purposelessness of a child but with the deep intensity of purposeful devotion. Thus, not only Rāmprasād in his numerous songs but even his follower, Kumār Narachandra could indulge in such

intimate, familiar yet significant expressions towards his special divinity:

নেংটা মেয়ের যত আদর জটে ব্যাটা ত বাড়ালে
নইলে কেন ডাকৃতে হবে দিবানিশি মা মা বলে ।।
শ্রীরাম জগতের গুরু জটে ব্যাটা তাঁর গুরু
আপনি কেটা বুঝলেনাকো রইল শ্যামার চরণতলে ।।
বিষম পাগল জটে ব্যাটা শ্মশান ত তার মৌরস পাটা
(আবার) বেটীর এম্‌নি বুকের পাটা জটের বুকে পা-টা দিলে ।।

CHARACTER OF THESE SONGS

These spiritual effusions of devout heart, therefore, are in a sense beyond criticism; and in order to appreciate these songs one must realise the entire mentality of these devotee-poets, their system of belief, the earnestness, warmth and vigour of their simple faith, the transport and exaltation of their spiritual mysticism. What these poets give us is not the meditative speculation of systematic philosophers, nor the intellectual subtlety of trained logicians, nor the theological cammonplaces of religious preachers, but the life-long realisation of an intensely spiritual nature. The songs, therefore, represent not a professional effort but a born gift, or a gift acquired through religious worship and aspiration. It is, however, a gift or an enthusiasm, which is in fact an inspiration, a mood of divine madness which draws from visible and familiar things an intuition of unknown realities. Its treatment of the facts of religious experience is not the less appealing but all the more artistic because it is so sincere and genuine, because it awakens a sense of conviction in ourselves. The temper is essentially that of a secular lyric. It is not transcendental nor beyond the sphere of artistic expression, because the inspired artist makes us feel the reality and universality of his individual passion, and the mystery of his mystery stands clear and visible in its own familiar light before our eyes.

APPEAL FOR A MORE EMOTIONAL FORM OF RELIGION

This transfiguration of the primeval instinct of filial affection of

> A child crying in the night
> A child crying for the light

into a religious phantasy or poetic rapture is a remarkable achievement of Rāmprasād's songs. The incommunicable communion between the human soul and the divine is communicated through the exceedingly familiar and authentic intensity of the child's feeling for the mother. This new standpoint vivifies religion with a human element, and lifts one of the primitive instincts of human nature into the means of glorious exaltation. It brings back colour and beauty into religious life and appeals to the imagination and the feelings. Its essential truth lies in its appeal for a more emotional religion and in its protest against the hard intellectuality of doctrines and dogmas. It is not the isolated expression of moral or religious ideas but its fusion into a whole in one memorable personality, expressing itself in a distinctly novel yet familiar mode of utterance, which makes these songs so remarkable. The Tāntric form of worship has its terrible as well as its beautiful aspect; but in these latter-day Śākta writers we find an assertion of the rights of the emotional and the aesthetic in human nature.

INFLUENCE OF BAIṢṆAB IDEAS

But in this idea of the Divine Mother (*mātṛ-bhāb*) which primarily follows the authority of the Tantras and the natural mental bent of the age and the race and the individual, Rāmprasād was not little influenced, directly or indirectly, by the Baiṣṇab idea of *bātsalya*. Throughout the history of the Sākta and Baiṣṇab conflict we find, no doubt, the two sects directly antagonistic to each other; and in Bhāratchandra, even in Rāmprasād himself, we find the virulence of a militant sectarian zeal. But, as on the one hand, we find a

Baiṣṇab poet like Chaṇḍīdās making use of Tāntric imagery and Tāntric idea of *ṣaṭchakra-sādhan*,[1] on the other we see Rāmprasād, a confirmed Śākta poet, considerably influenced by Baiṣṇab ideas in his *Kālī-kīrtan* and *Kṛṣṇa-kīrtan*. Not only does he imitate in places the characteristic diction and imagery of Baiṣṇab Padābalīs, but he deliberately describes the *goṣṭha, rās, milan* of Bhagabatī in imitation of the *Bṛndāban-līlā* of Śrīkṛṣṇa. It does not concern us here whether the girl Pārbatī figures in a better artistic light with a *beṇu* and *pāchanbāḍi* in her hand or whether the picture deserves the sarcastic comments of Āju Gosvāmī[2]; what we need note is that here as well as in his Āgamanī songs, Rāmprasād is unmistakably utilising Baiṣṇab ideas.

This imitation of the Bṛndāban-lilā or of the Bātsalya-bhāba of Yaśodā for Bāla Gopāl was, however, not wholly isolated, sporadic or objectless. It indicated a general desire with these poets of the 18th century to afford a common ground of reconciliation and good feeling between the two antagonistic sects. There is no distinction in reality, says Rāmprasād in many a song, between Viṣṇu and Śakti, between Kālī and Kṛṣṇa:

প্রসাদ ভণে অভেদজ্ঞানে কালরূপে মেশামেশি।
ওরে একে পাঁচ পাঁচেই এক মন কর না দ্বেষাদ্বেষি॥

1 কিবা কারিকরের আজব কারিকুরি।
তার মধ্যে ছয় পদ্ম রাখিয়াছে পুরি॥
সহস্রারে হয় পদ্ম সহস্রক দল
তার পরে মণিপুর পরম শিবের স্থল॥

quoted from Chaṇḍīdās in *Bīrbhūmi* (new series) vol. ii, p. 15, which see for a good exposition of *Prasādī Saṅgīt*. But we do not know which Chaṇḍidās is meant.

2 না জানে পরম তত্ত্ব কাঁটালের আমসত্ত্ব মেয়ে হয়ে ধেনু কি চরায়। ইত্যাদি।

This attempt at removing *dveṣādveṣi* (ill-blood) and at establishing the ultimate identity of the different images of the godhead is at the root of the later song of Kamalākānta:

জান না রে মন পরম কারণ শ্যামা কভু মেয়ে নয়।
সে যে মেঘের বরণ করিয়া ধারণ কখন কখন পুরুষ হয়॥
কভু বাঁধে ধড়া কভু বাঁধে চূড়া ময়ূরপুচ্ছ শোভিত তায়।
কখন পার্ব্বতী কখন শ্রীমতী কখন রামের জানকী হয়॥
হয়ে এলোকেশী করে লয়ে অসি দানবচয়ে করে সভয়।
(কভু) ব্রজপুরে আসি বাজাইয়া বাঁশী ব্রজবাসী-মন হরিয়া লয়॥
যেরূপে যে জন করয়ে ভজন সেইরূপে তার মানসে রয়।
কমলাকান্তের হৃদি-সরোবরে কমলমাঝে কমল উদয়॥

ORIGINALITY OF RĀMPRASĀD

These devotional songsters in general and their precursor Rāmprasād in particular, therefore, established, through the current form of Śakti-worship, tempered by natural human ideas derived from the Baiṣṇab poets, a peculiar form of religious-poetic communion; and realising this in their own life removed from the turbid atmosphere of controversy, they expressed the varieties of their religious experience in touching songs accessible to all. There is no other conspicuous instance of this type of Śakti-worship through the Mātṛ-bhāba in ancient literature. The classical example king Suratha's propitiation of the Adyā Sakti described in the *Mārkaṇḍeya Chaṇḍī* is altogether of a different kind; nor could the earlier Bengali Chaṇḍī-authors, who indulged themselves in hymns or elaborate narratives of praise, anticipate the sentiment of tender devotion and half-childish solicitation of Rāmprasād.[1] In this respect the

1 The exceedingly humanised picture of Gaurī or Durgā in Rāmeśvar's *Śibāyan* or even in Bhāratchandra's *Annadā-maṅgal* represents an altogether different phase of perhaps the same humanising tendency in contemporary literature.

originality of Rāmprasād is undoubted and it exalts him to a place all his own.

The Baiṣṇab poets, again, describe in their exquisite songs a type of love which is lifted beyond the restrictions of social convention; and their love-songs, passionate and often sensuous, may, in the uninitiated, excite worldly desires instead of inspiring a sense of freedom from worldly attachments. The songs of Rāmprasād and his followers, on the other hand, are free from this dangerous tendency. Although these simple and tender longings for the Mother may not, in thought and diction, compare favourably with the finer outbursts of the Baiṣṇab poets, yet they are accessible indiscriminately to the uninitiated as well as to the initiated, to the sinner as well as to the saint, to the ignorant as well as to the learned. They constitute the common property of all; and as in the case of the tender love of the mother, every human child has an equal claim to share it.

ŚIBCHANDRA, ŚAMBHUCHANDRA AND NARACHANDRA

But this exceedingly difficult task of writing religious songs, which should be at the same time artistic and passionate, has its own dangers and pitfalls. When the inspiration does not reach its high-water mark, the resulting song is apt to be either dull and flat or laboured and artificial. There is nothing like the dulness of a religious writer at his dullest. This trait, now and then noticeable in Rāmprasād himself, is often very marked in the less inspired song-writers who accompanied or followed him. There is not much in these inferior poets (always with exceptions, of course) which is worth detailed study or attention, and we shall pass over them as briefly as possible. Of the two sons of Rājā Kṛṣṇa-chandra, Rājā Śibchandra and Kumār Śambhuchandra, the latter is a better poet, no doubt, but his productions are stilted and conventional and are of too trifling a quantity to deserve

any further comment. The productions of Kumār Narachandra, a member of the same family, are however more abundant and are of a better quality, though not absolutely free from the same trait. He could reproduce the spirit and even the language of Rāmprasād pretty well. We select three of his songs (beside one which we have already quoted p. 375) which are not as well-known as they ought to be:

যে ভাল করেছ কালি আর ভালতে কাজ নাই,
ভালয় ভালয় বিদায় দে মা আলোয় আলোয় চলে যাই ॥
মা তোমার করুণা যত বুঝিলাম অবিরত
ডাকিলাম কত শত কপাল ছাড়া পথ নাই ॥
জঠরে দিয়েছ স্থান করোনা মা অপমান
কিসে হবে পরিত্রাণ নরচন্দ্র ভাবে তাই ॥

কেন মিছে মা মা কর মায়ের দেখা পাবে নাই
থাকলে আসি দিতো দেখা সর্ব্বনাশী বেঁচে নাই ॥
শ্মশানে মশানে কত পীঠস্থান ছিল যত
খুঁজে হলাম ওষ্ঠাগত কেন আর যন্ত্রণা পাই ॥
বিমাতার তীরে গিয়ে কুশপুতুল দাহাইয়ে
অশৌচান্তে পিণ্ড দিয়ে কালাশৌচে কাশী যাই ॥
দ্বিজ নরচন্দ্র ভণে মায়ের জন্য ভাবনা কেনে
মা নাম গেছে শিব ত আছে তরিবার ভাবনা নাই ॥

যে হয় পাষাণের মেয়ে তার হৃদে কি দয়া থাকে
দয়াহীনা না হলে কি নাথি মারে নাথের বুকে ॥
দয়াময়ী নাম জগতে দয়ার লেশ নাই তোমাতে
গলে পর মুণ্ডমালা পরের ছেলের মাথা ঠুকে ॥
মা মা বলে যত ডাক শুনে ত মা শুনে নাক
নরা এম্‌নি নাথি-খেকো তবু দুর্গা বলে ডাকে ॥

DEWĀN NANDA KIŚOR RĀY

Such simple yet direct utterance becomes rarer as we pass on to later writers of this group. The following song which bears the *bhaṇitā* of Nandakumār is supposed by some to be the composition of Nanda Kiśor Rāy, Dewān of Burdwan Rāj, but it may possibly be a solitary song of Mahārāj Nandakumār accidentally preserved:

ভুবন ভুলালি গো ভুবনমোহিনী।
মূলাধারে মহোৎপলে বীণাবাদ্য-বিনোদিনী ॥
শরীরে শারীরী যন্ত্রে সুষুম্নাদি ত্রয় তন্ত্রে
গুণভেদে মহামন্ত্রে তিনগ্রাম-সঞ্চারিণী ॥
আধারে ভৈরবাকার ষড়্দলে শ্রীরাগ আর
মণিপুরেতে মল্লার বসন্তে হৃৎপ্রকাশিনী ॥
বিশুদ্ধ হিল্লোলস্বরে কর্ণাটিক আজ্ঞাপুরে
তাল মান লয় স্বরে ত্রিসপ্তস্বরভেদিনী ॥
মহামায়া মোহপাশে বদ্ধ কর অনায়াসে
তত্ত্ব লয়ে তত্ত্বাকাশে স্থির আছে সৌদামিনী ॥
শ্রীনন্দকুমার[1] কয় তত্ত্ব না নিশ্চয় হয়
তব তত্ত্বগুণত্রয় কাঁকিমুখে আচ্ছাদিনী ॥

DEWĀN RAGHUNĀTH RĀY (1750-1836)

This song is quoted here not so much for its historic interest, nor for any special merit, but as a specimen of the artificial and tedious style of later poets. The same tendency of indulging in symbolism, didactics and banalities under a spiritual glamour is also remarkably noticeable in the songs of Dewān Raghunāth Rāy of Burdwan, a brother of Nanda Kiśor. But Raghunāth was not a Śākta of the narrow type and addressed several songs to Kṛṣṇa as well, in some of which he maintains the eventual identity of this Baiṣṇab

1 The *bhaṇitā* has Nandakumār and not Nandakiśor.

deity with the special divinity of his adoration. It is hardly necessary to quote specimens, but the following song is the nearest approach to the style of Rāmprasād which had been all along the deservedly recognised standard:

পড়িয়ে ভবসাগরে ডুবে মা তনুর তরী
মায়া-ঝড় মোহ-তুফান ক্রমে বাড়ে গো শঙ্করী ।।
একে মন-মাঝি আনাড়ি তাতে ছ-জন গোঁয়ার দাঁড়ী
কুবাতাসে দিয়ে পাড়ি হাবুডুবু খেয়ে মরি ॥
ভেঙ্গে গেল ভক্তির হাল ছিঁড়ে গেল শ্রদ্ধার পাল
তরী হল বান্‌চাল্ বল এখন কি করি ॥
উপায় না দেখি আর অকিঞ্চন[1] ভেবে সার
তরঙ্গে দিয়ে সাঁতার দুর্গানামের ভেলা ধরি ॥

KAMALĀKĀNTA BHAṬṬĀCHARYA

Thus Burdwan, like Nadīyā, had been for a long time the centre of these activities, and we find even Mahārāj Mahatābchānd, who was a song-writer of no mean merit, carrying on this literary tradition till his death in 1897. Of this Burdwan group the most famous and indeed the most remarkable songster is Kamalākānta Bhaṭṭāchārya, a native of Ambikānagar in Kalnā, who subsequently removed to Koṭālhāṭ in Burdwan and lived under the royal patronage of Mahārāj Tejaschandra. Of the later group of devotional poets, Kamalākānta approaches Rāmprasād very closely in tone and feeling and style. Mahatābchānd printed in 1857 from the poet's own manuscript nearly 250 songs which have been thus handsomely preserved. This collection was reprinted in 1885 by Śrīkānta Mallik in Calcutta under the title *Kamalākānta-Padābalī*[2], and it certainly deserves reprint again.

It is not possible within our limited scope to analyse these

1 The *bhaṇitā* of Raghunāth in these songs is অকিঞ্চন.

2 A copy of this reprint was found by the present writer in the Sāhitya Pariṣat Library.

250 songs in detail or to quote extensive specimens which alone would illustrate the depth, variety and beauty of Kamalākānta's songs. Like the songs of his great predecessor Rāmprasād, his songs reveal to us the inward history of his spiritual life, the various stages of his religious experience from worship and adoration to the attainment of the state of highest felicity. It is not his meditative speculation nor his theological tenets nor the vague coating of symbolism in his songs which constitute their charm; over and above all these tower his spiritual sense, his imagination and emotions, his extraordinary personality ; and the palpitating humanity which vivifies every line imparts a soul-felt meaning to his devotional songs. He expresses common needs, common thoughts, and every-day emotions of the religious man; and if he is a mystic, his mysticism is not of the esoteric order It is difficult to quote specimens when one must confine oneself to a limited number, but the following songs, well-known as they are, are quoted to make them better known:

আর কিছু নাই শ্যামা মা তোর কেবল দুটি চরণ রাঙ্গা
শুনি তাও নিয়েছেন ত্রিপুরারি দেখে হলাম সাহস-ভাঙ্গা ।।
জ্ঞাতি বন্ধু সুত দারা সুখের সময় সবাই তারা
বিপদকালে কেউ কোথা নাই ঘরবাড়ী ওড়্গায়ের ডাঙ্গা ।।
নিজগুণে যদি রাখ করুণা-নয়নে দেখ
নইলে জপে তপে তোমায় পাওয়া সে সব কথা ভূতের সাঙ্গা ।।
কমলাকান্তের কথা মাকে বলি মনের ব্যথা
আমার জপের মালা ঝুলি কাঁথা জপের ঘরে রইল টাঙ্গা ।।[1]

কালি সব ঘুচালি লেঠা ।
শ্রীনাথের লিখন আছে যেমন রাখবি কি না রাখবি সেটা ।।
তোমার যারে কৃপা হয় তার সৃষ্টিছাড়া রূপের ছটা
তার কটিতে কৌপিন জোড়ে গায়ে ছাই আর মাথায় জটা ।।

1 *Kamalākānta Padābalī*, p. 29.

শ্মশান পেলে সুখে ভাস তুচ্ছ বাস মণি কোঠা
আপনি যেমন ঠাকুর তেমন্ ঘুচলোনাক সিদ্ধি ঘোঁটা ॥
দুখে রাখ সুখে রাখ করবো কি আর দিয়ে খোঁটা
আমি দাগ দিয়ে পরেছি যখন পুঁছতে নারি সাধের ফোঁটা ॥
জগৎ জুড়ে নাম দিয়েছ কমলাকান্ত কালীর বেটা
এখন মায়ে পোয়ে কেমন ব্যাভার ইহার মর্ম্ম জান্‌বে কেটা ॥[1]

One characteristic note of these songs is their sincerity, a sincerity which redeems even the slightest song from insignificance, and confers on the finer pieces an importance of a different order from that which attaches to even the most brilliant productions of his contemporaries. The popular opinion which places Kamalākānta next to Rāmprasād is fully justified, and we conclude by quoting the lines of Nilāmbar Mukhopādhyāy, a later poet, who eulogises Kamalākānta and Rāmprasād in the same breath:

মায়ের প্রজা হওরে আসি।
মায়ের সমভাব নাই কমি বেশি ॥
রামপ্রসাদ এক পাটা পেয়ে মহত্তরাণ করেছে কাশী
কমলাকান্ত ভেক নিয়েছে শ্যামা ভাবছেন বোসে
আবার কোথায় পাব কাশী ॥

1 *Ibid*, p. 39.

CHAPTER XII

MISCELLANEOUS WRITERS IN THE OLD STYLE

The period of interregnum in poetry which followed upon Bhāratchandra's death had been, we have seen, essentially a lyric interval in which we find the Kabiwālās, Ṭappā-writers and authors of devotional songs creating a body of literature which, if not great in positive achievement, is at least remarkable in the negative quality of marking a natural reaction against the ornate and classical type of literary practice of the 18th century. At the same time the groups of writers mentioned never separate themselves wholly from the traditions of the past, nor do they work their way from the older to the newer style of the 19th century. In this sense, they are neither ancient nor modern; neither do they represent the past adequately nor indicate and foretell the future. They were at the same time incapable of great literature; nor were the times suitable for it. They are not, it is true, idle singers of an empty day; but they deal essentially with trifles, though with trifles poetically adorned. Occupying, as they do, an intermediate position between the old and the new writers, they yet afford no natural medium of transition from the school of the past to the school of the present. Although possessing lyric quality, they have little affinity to modern lyrists, nor can they be definitely affiliated to any recognised school of ancient writers.

PROPOSED GROUPS OF WRITERS

But the poets and songsters whom we propose to take up in this chapter, unlike the writers already dealt with, definitely and unmistakably tread in the footsteps of the old-world poets. Their poetic gifts move within the narrow compass of conventional art. Though exhibiting wide individual

differences, these imitative poets are bound by the common characteristic of belonging to the past, both in form and spirit. Being thus artificially limited, they are hardly original, except in so far as they may vary a single tune by playing it upon the several recognised stops. This department of verse, therefore, is singularly depressing. Except in inspired snatches, there is hardly anything of first-rate quality; and the great bulk of this narrowly imitative literature is flat and tedious. The recognised literary species had been already suffering from exhaustion of material, and the declining powers of these belated imitators could hardly impart to them a spark of vivifying force.

Want of fresh subject-matter and of capacity for original achievement is precisely the defect of this poetry. In the first place, we have a group of writers who follow the time-honoured tradition of translating the Sanskrit *Rāmāyaṇa*, *Mahābhārata* and *Śrīmad-bhāgavata* into the vernacular. Next we have a band of minor poets—some of them not merely minor but insignificant—who wrote verse-tales of the erotic type in imitation of Bhāratchandra, but who could not reproduce his poetry as they could magnify the dull obscenities which unfortunately taint his writings. After them, come a host of miscellaneous songsters—most of them literary nondescripts—among whom we need notice in some detail the authors of Pāṁchāli and Yātrā.

TRANSLATORS: RAGHUNANDAN GOSVĀMĪ

The translators of this period inherited the tradition but lost the art which had made their predecessors Kṛttibās or Kāśīdās immortal. A little before 1760, we have a number of notable translations, among which may be mentioned the delightful version of *Gīta-govinda* by Giridhar, but after 1760, this department of literature is hardly graced by any remarkable achievement. The translators of this period hardly exhibit any striking literary feature, and it would serve no purpose to recapitulate their half-forgotten names. Of these,

however, Raghunandan Gosvāmī, though not exactly a translator, is remarkable for his re-writing of the themes of *Rāmāyaṇa* and *Bhāgavata*. Raghunandan[1] was, as he himself tells us, born in the village of Māḍo near Mānkar, Burdwan. His dates are not exactly known[2] but he undoubtedly belongs to our period; for Rajnarayan Basu in his *Ekāl O Sekāl* relates how Raghunandan used to come very frequently to Calcutta to meet the lexicographer, Rāmkamal Sen. His two considerable works are *Śrī-Rām-rasāyan* and *Śrī-Rādhā-mādhaboday*, besides *Gīta-mālā*, a work on Kṛṣṇa-līlā. Although both these works belong chronologically to a later period—the latter, as its colophon says,[3] having been composed in 1849 and the former probably in 1831[4]—it could be convenient to notice them briefly here. His *Rām-rasāyan*, a voluminous and laborious production, is a tolerably well-written version of the *Rāmāyaṇa* chiefly based upon Vālmīki but supplemented from other sources. The language is clear, vigorous and picturesque, although indicating a decided leaning towards Sanskrit words: and the work is composed throughout in the *payār* metre, occasionally diversified by varieties of *tripadī* and other common metres. Strictly speaking, the author is not close or literal or even faithful in his version which is more than a mere translation. There are considerable additions and omissions[5], and the whole

1 He gives some account of himself and his family at the conclusion of his *Rām-rasāyan*.

2 The Bangabāsī edition of his *Rām-rasāyaṇ* gives 1786 (1193 B.S.) as the date of his birth.

3 শ্রীরাধামাধবয়োঃ প্রীতয়ে ভবতু শাকেহব্দে ক্ষ্মাসপ্তসপ্তক্ষ্মামিতে বৃষসংক্রমে গঙ্গাতীরে পাণিহাটীগ্রামেহয়ং পূর্ণতামগাৎ। Published by the author's son Madan Gopāl Gosvāmī in 1890 (1297 B.S.)

4 This date is given in the preface to the Baṅgabāsī edition, also in *Baṅga-bhāṣār Lekhak*, p. 249. It could not have been, as Dinesh Chandra Sen states (*History*, p. 193), composed in the middle of the 18th century.

5 Especially in *Uttar-kāṇḍa*.

theme is treated with a freedom which characterises most of the early translators. The author possesses a marvellous narrative gift which makes his work interesting. It is not accurate to state that the author is merely a learned Paṇḍit entirely devoid of poetic gift[1] or power of delineating character, but his poetic gift is not equal to his capacity of rhythmical expression. In spite of all its faults, it is however a very remarkable production and to regard it as perhaps the best Bengali version of the *Rāmāyaṇa* after Kṛttibās is not altogether unwarranted. In his next work, *Śrī-Rādhā-mādhaboday*, however, the Baiṣṇab Raghunandan found a more congenial subject and greater scope for poetical treatment. Its essential theme is the time-worn yet eternally delightful Bṛndābana-līlā of Śrī Kṛṣṇa beginning of Śrī Rādhā's *rāgodaya* (dawning of love) to the final *rās-līlā*. The work, written in the Kāvya form, is divided into thirty-four Ullāsas or chapters in which the whole course of Rādhā's love is elaborately depicted with the rapture of a devotee and the enthusiasm of a poet. The first few chapters which describe the germination (*bhābāṅkurodgama*) and growth (*bhāba-prakāśa*) of love in Rādhā's heart and the first meeting of the lovers through the contrivance of Paurṇamāsī and Madhu-maṅgal—two unique creations of Ragunandan's—are written with considerable skill and poetic spirit.[2] It may be described, in a sense, as a systematic Baiṣṇab Kāvya.

But in both these works, Raghunandan exhibits the same decadent tendency towards finical nicety and metrical dexterity, towards frigid conceits, conventional images and

1 See especially the poetic description in অরণ্যকাণ্ড, ষষ্ঠ পরিচ্ছেদ ; কিষ্কিন্ধ্যাকাণ্ড, ষষ্ঠ পরিচ্ছেদ, and the last chapter on শ্রীরামচন্দ্রের অশোকবন-বিহার (উত্তর কাণ্ড) ।

2 For an appreciation of these chapters, see M. M. Haraprasad Sastri's article in *Nārāyaṇ*, 1322-23, vol. i, pp. 31-43 and pp. 638-648. Madhumaṅgal, however, is not an original creation of Raghunandan's, but he was a more or less conventional figure of the Vidūṣaka type in the popular Yātrās.

elaborate metaphors, which marks all poetical writing, secular and religious, since the time of Bhāratchandra. In the narrative portions, Raghunandan is easy and natural enough and shows a considerable gift of quiet humour; but in his poetical description he affects, in common with contemporary poets, an elaborate and artificial style. His weakness for the display of metrical skill, again, is very marked. Besides *payār* and *tripadī*, he makes use of a large variety of metres—*māljhāp*, *ekābalī*, *lalitā*, *toṭaka*, *pajjhaṭikā*, *tunaka*, to mention only a few—in his *Rādhā-mādhaboday*. The following description of the heroine's beauty, although showing considerable skill, is yet conventional and illustrates the author's leaning towards sanskritisation:

সখি দেখহ, সখি দেখহ, নবনীপক-মূলে।
ত্যজি অম্বর ধরণীপর নবনীরদ বূলে॥
দলিতাঞ্জন-চয়-গঞ্জন মধুর দ্যুতি-জালে।
করু শ্যামল পৃথিবী-তল নভমণ্ডল-ভালে॥
চপলা-ততি ঝলকে অতি থির অদ্ভুত কাঁতী।
অতি-পাণ্ডুর-রুচি সুন্দর বিলসে বকপাঁতী॥
সুরভূপতি-ধনুরাকৃতি বহু রঙ্গহি সাজে।
সুষমাযুত অতি অদ্ভুত শশিমণ্ডল রাজে[1]॥

The same remark applies to the following description of Rāma in his *Rāma-rasāyaṇ*:

জয়তি জয়তি ধরণীপতি জয়তি জয়তি রাম।
জনক-নৃপতি-দুহিতা-পতি নির্ম্মল-গুণধাম॥
কোটি-মদন-মদ-খণ্ডন-পদনখ-রুচিলেশ।
চরণ-কমল-রুচিমণ্ডল জিত-নবদিবসেশ॥
কদলী-তরু-সুললিত উরু মধ্যম অতি ক্ষীণ।
রমণী-মন-মৃগ-নর্ত্তন মণিতট উর পীন॥

1 *Rādhā-mādhaboday*, p. 31.

বনিতাকুল-ধৃতি-শৈবল-ভঞ্জন-ভুজদণ্ড ।
বনিতামদ-তিমির-বিপদ-কর শশধর তুণ্ড ॥
মিথিলা-পতি-তনয়া-ধৃতি-দলন-নয়ন-বাণ ।
রঘু-নৃপকুল-বিমল-কমল-বিকশন রবি-ভান ॥[1]

These short lyrics, however, are inadequate for giving an idea of Raghunandan's style; but they will sufficiently indicate both his merits and defects. Raghunandan is by no means a slovenly writer, but in his striving after technical perfection, he is often elaborate and artificial. His writings display faultless execution and a great command over the language; but ingenuity and verbal or rhythmic dexterity can never supply perennial nutriment for art. It is only when Raghunandan rises above these prepossessions— and he does this not very seldom—that he exhibits poetical quality of no mean order.

JAYNĀRĀYAṆ GHOṢAL (1751-1821)

Next to Raghunandan, the royal poet Jaynārāyaṇ Ghoṣāl of Bhūkailās (1751-1821), deserves mention. After spending the greater portion of his life in the service of the Nawāb and in the confidence of the Company, Jaynārāyaṇ obtained the title of Mahārājā Bāhādur from the Emperor of Delhi. During his last days, he passed a retired life of religious devotion at Benares where he has left many traces of his large-hearted benevolence[2]. It was here that he conceived the idea of translating the *Kāśī-khaṇḍa* into Bengali. The whole history of the undertaking is set forth by Jaynārāyaṇ himself in the last chapter of his work[3]. The translation, begun in 1792, was completed in a hundred chapters (about 11,200 lines) under the joint authorship of Jaynārāyaṇ,

1 *Rām-Rasāvaṇ*, p. 931.

2 For more details about his life, see *Sāhitya-Pariṣat Patrikā*, vol. vii, p. 1-25; *Sāhitya*, 1302 pp. 1491-6: Preface to the Sāhitya-Pariṣat edition of Jaynārāyaṇ's *Kāśī-parikramā*.

3 See *Kāśī-parikramā* (Sāhitya-Pariṣat edition), ch. xiii, pp. 222-24.

Nṛsiṁha Deb Rāy of Pāṭuli, Jagannāth Mukhopādhyāy, Bakreśvar Pañchānan and several other scholars and poets. After the completion of the hundred chapters, several supplementary chapters, which stand by themselves, were added by Jaynārāyaṇ himself, giving a more or less faithful picture of contemporary Benares drawn from the poet's own observation. The work itself is a tedious and laborious compilation; but this supplementary account, which is the best part and which has been published separately under the title of *Kāśī-parikramā*, is indeed very interesting as a good specimen of descriptive poetry of this period. The topography and other details of the holy city are given with elaborate care, and in places the descriptions are original, amusing and considerably realistic. The *parikramās* are not rare things in old Bengali literature and we have *Nabadvīpa-parikramā* and *Braja-parikramā* of Narahari Chakrabartī and a prose *Bṛndābana-parikramā* belonging to the 18th century. With these works of the same nature *Kāśī parikramā* does not compare unfavourably ; and as a more or less trustworthy contemporary occount of the holy city, the work is certainly valuable. But from the strictly literary point of view, it seems to possess little interest or importance. Jaynārāyaṇ is a facile and methodical versifier but he is hardly a poet. The pictorial nature of his theme, no doubt, afforded many opportunities for higher poetical flights, but the author is so entirely devoid of the soaring gift that he is uniformly and hopelessly pedestrian, although occasionally he gives us undoubtedly vigorous descriptive verses. He has no fancy, no enthusiasm ; and his over-praised composition[1] is often merely prosaic and always rigidly conventional. The only praise which he deserves relates to the fact that although he adheres both in spirit and form to the traditions and expectations of the time, he yet devotes a stern attention to

1 Dinesh Chandra Sen, in *History, loc. cit.* and in *Sāhitya, loc. cit.* ; Nagendranath Basu, preface to the Sāhitya-Pariṣat edition of *Kāśī-parikramā*.

the realities of scenery and character described. He is a good photographer but not a painter ; and those who consider him as such may appreciate him better. Jaynārāyaṇ's other published work, *Karuṇā-nidān-bilās*[1], although less known, is a much better production. Purporting to be a work devoted to the glorification of the special deity whose image the author had set up at Kāśī and from whom the book derives its name, it really treats of Kṛṣṇa-līlā in a refreshingly original and poetical way.

SCHOOL OF BHĀRATCHANDRA

Other minor writers, who favoured the old style and belonged to this group, need not and can not be dealt with at much length. We must, however, mention, if not enlarge upon, a school of poets (or rather versifiers) who were the direct imitators of Bhāratchandra, and continued the style of *Bidyā-sundar* even beyond the fifties. Bhāratchandra, like Rāmprasād in another sphere, had been through his *Bidyā-sundar* the ruling power for nearly a century. Writing under the shadow of his genius, this belated group of writers are all servile copyists, reproducing the style and scheme of his *Bidyā-sundar* down to minute details, but unable to repeat its poetry, they exaggerate its freedom into licence. The details of Sundar's amours, his intrigues, his capture and ultimate union with Bidyā are all repeated anew in a more or less diversified form; but the stories are frankly indecent, although generally presented like their prototype under the all-atoning garb of religion ; and their heroes are typical Don Juans in the worst sense. The versification is poor, the descriptions dull and conventional; and there is hardly any elevating poetic touch or other redeeming feature in these verse-tales, which are

1 The book is included in the list of books published by the School Book Society before 1821. Long, in his article in *Calcutta Review*, xiii. 1850, describes this word as "an account of a new god recently created by a rich native." For an account of the work, see *Sāhitya Pariṣat Patrikā, loc. cit.*

never graceful but always graceless in one particular. It would be a mistake to attribute all this to the influence of Persian tales; for it is not clear whether these foreign tales were abundantly accessible and well-known to the writers of this generation ; and even when accessible, it is not clear whether such tales are really as bad as they are often represented to be. The Persian tales, to judge from the specimens which have survived, very seldom sink to that depth of indecent realism where these productions of a degenerate and depraved taste do often wallow; on the other hand, these elaborate Bengali tales unmistakably bear the stamp of the *Bidyāsundar*-style run riot. It would be better to regard them as representing a phase of the development of literary taste in this period of unstability and degeneracy which is also partially reflected in the *kheuḍ* of the Kabiwālās, in the grossness of certain aspects of *hāp-ākhḍāi, tarjā, paṁchāli* and other productions of the same type. Most of these verse-tales are now scarce, suppressed by the law and never allowed to be reprinted; and it is not necessary to drag them out of their deserved obscurity; but there is evidence to show that from the end of the 18th to the middle of the 19th century this prolific literature, outrageous as it is to all taste, obtained considerable favour and currency. The earliest surviving specimen of these tales belongs to a period posterior to 1825, although it is quite probable that it was preceded by a host of similar productions belonging to an earlier date, which are now lost to us. Kālī Kṛṣṇa Dās's *Kāminī-kumār*, however, is placed by some at the end of the 18th century, but the earliest printed copy[1] that we have seen bears the date of 1836; while *Chandrakānta*, the next well-known piece, cannot possibly belong to a much earlier date. Madan Mohan's

1 The copy in the Sāhitya-Pariṣat Library is wanting in the title-page. There is a copy of Kālī Kṛṣṇa's other work, *Mānbhañjan*, in the Sāhitya-Pariṣat Library bearing 1856 A.D. (Śaka 1778) as the date apparently of the first edition. It is not unlikely, therefore, to hold that Kālī Kṛṣṇa's works belong to the period between 1836 and 1856.

Bāsabdattā, written in the same style but with finer power and greater delicacy, was first published in 1837. These were followed by a host of other works of the same type such as Tārāchāṁd Datta's *Manmatha-kābya* (1844), Munsi Erādot's *Kuraṅga-bhānu* (1845), Umācharaṇ Tribedī's *Madan-mādhurī* (1856), Banamālī Ghoṣāl's *Padmagandhā-upākhyān* (1864), Biśvambhar Dās's *Rajanīkānta* (1870), Gobinda Śīl's *Hemlatā-ratikānta* (1870?), all belonging to a period between 1840 and 1870. This would, therefore, amply indicate that between these dates there was an exuberant growth, if not recrudescence of this reactionary literature, helped probably by the reprinting of *Bidyā-sundar* in 1836 and 1847.

MISCELLANEOUS SONG

The miscellaneous poetry of this period is so unmanageably scattered and so diversified that it presents a difficult problem of selection and of satisfactory treatment. Besides the varieties of poems and songs already mentioned, we have multifarious types of more or less rural production, mostly musical, like *Jāri-gān, Gājīr gān, Hābu-gīt, Nale-gīt, Kīrtan-gān, Ḍhap-saṅgīt, Gheṭu-gān, Sāri-gān, Jhumur, Ākhḍai, Half-ākhḍai, Bhāṭiyāli, Mānik Pīrer gān, Chaḍak-pūjār gān, Gambhīrā, Bāul-saṁgīt, tārjā-gān*, specimens of which have survived in the mouths of the people, although not always available in print. Much of this rural literature, composed by inglorious and unknown poets, display, as most rural literature does, a touching quality and a natural poetic sensibility which is interesting to note;[1] but, generally speaking, much of it is not literature at all and must be rigidly excluded. Among these purveyors of ephemeral stuff, the authors of Pāṁchāli and Yātrā must be mentioned, not because they are always worth mention but because their literary pretensions

1 Accounts of rural poets and their songs have from time to time appeared in various Bengali journals. For an interesting appreciation of rural literature in general, see Rabindra Nath Thakur, *Grāmya Sāhitya* published in his volume on *Lok-sāhitya*.

have, rightly or wrongly, always received recognition, as a peculiar form of indigenous literature which at one time had obtained great popularity.

PAṀCHĀLI (পাঁচালি) SONGS

The origin of Paṁchāli-songs of the modern type cannot be definitely traced. Dinesh Chandra Sen, in his two works on Bengali Literature[1] puts forward the brilliant but hardly convincing conjecture that the Pāṁchāli (spelling the word as *Pāñchāli*) is ultimately connected with Pañchāl or Kanauj which he takes to be the birth-place of this kind of song. It may, however, be pointed out that there is no trace of Pāṁchāli-songs of the modern type (such as those popularised by Dāśarathi Rāy) in ancient literature; but that the word pāṁchāli (পাঁচালি), it is well known, was used indiscriminately for all sorts of poetical composition which could be recited and which possessed a religious theme. Thus, the *Parāgali Mahābhārat* or the *Mahābhārat* of Nityānanda Ghoṣ is called *bhārat-pāṁchāli* or simply *pāṁchāli* in their respective *bhaṇitās*. Similarly *Kabikaṅkaṇ Chaṇḍī* is designated throughout by its author as *pāṁchāli* or *pāṁchāli-prabandha* ; and even in a work like *Jagannāth-maṅgal*, Gadādhar Maṇḍal states that he is composing his work in the style of *pāṁchāli*.[2] Thus we have, besides those mentioned above, *Śaṇir pāṁchāli*, *Ṣaṣṭhīr pāṁchāli*, *Mansār pāṁchāli* and in fact *pāṁchālis* written in praise of all the popular deities. These older compositions used to be recited and were therefore suitably arranged for *pālās* or sittings for recitation. But they were not Pāṁchālis in the modern sense of the term and a distinction must be made between ancient and modern types. Another equally fanciful etymology of the term *pāṁchāli* is

1 *Baṅga-bhāṣā O Sāhitya*, 2nd Ed., p. 221 ; *History of Bengali Language and Literature*, p. 385.

2 We also get the word *pāṁchāli-chhanda* ; and unless the word *chhanda* means style of composition, it must be referred to a particular kind of metre.

given by deriving the word from *pā-chāli* or *pada-chālan*, which is taken to indicate that the leader of such a party recites, explains and sings his theme by moving about before the assembled audience; but this interpretation fails to explain the presence of nasal *ṁ* in the word itself. It would seem, however, that the best explanation is that which connects *pāṁchāli* with *nāchādi* (which was accompanied by dancing and singing) and which regards the term *pāṁchāli*, applied to the modern type of popular entertainment, as connoting five (*pāñcha*) essential things which must be present in all perfect kinds. What these five elements were cannot be exactly determined, but singing (*gān*), music (*sāj-bājāno*), recitation (*chhādā-kāṭāna*), poetical rivalry (*gāner laḍāi*) and possibly dancing (*nāch*) more or less accompanied all Pāṁchālis in later times. Originally narrative and song were mixed up, but there was exposition of a fuller narration or story after the manner of Kathakatā.

As this form of entertainment has practically disappeared from modern Bengal, it would be worth while to quote the following interesting description of a Pāṁchāli performance which, lengthy as it is, is still valuable as coming from one who himself was more or less connected with it and who must have also seen the performance of Dāśu Rāy himself:[1]

নব্যসম্প্রদায়ের গোচরার্থ 'পাঁচালি' বস্তুটা কি, একটু বুঝাইয়া বলা আবশ্যক। যদিও হাফ্-আখ্‌ড়াই ও দাঁড়া-কবির ন্যায় পাঁচালিতেও দুই দলে সঙ্গীত-সংগ্রাম হইত, কিন্তু উহাদের ন্যায় ইহাতে প্রকৃত প্রস্তাবে উত্তর প্রত্যুত্তর চলিত না। অর্থাৎ কবিতে যেমন একদল পূর্ব্বপক্ষরূপে আস্‌রী গান গাহিলে অপর দল উত্তরপক্ষরূপে তৎক্ষণাৎ তাহার জবাব বাঁধিয়া গান করেন, পাঁচালিতে তৎপরিবর্ত্তে পূর্ব্বাভ্যস্ত ছড়া ও গানের লড়াই হইত। যে দল অপেক্ষাকৃত উত্তমরূপে ছড়া কাটাইতে ও গান গাইতে পারিতেন, সেই দলের ভাগ্যেই জয়শ্রী দীপ্তিমতী হইয়া নিশান লাভ ঘটিত।

1 Manomohan Basu, *Manomohan-Gītabalī*, pp. 161-163.

পাঁচালির প্রণালী এইরূপ। হাফ্-আখ্ড়াইএর ন্যায় তান্পুর, বেহালা, ঢোল, মন্দিরা, মোচং প্রভৃতি ইহার বাদ্যযন্ত্র, ইদানীং ঐক্যতান বাদ্যের ফ্লুটাদি উপকরণও তৎসঙ্গে থাকিত। হাফ্-আখ্ড়াইয়ের ন্যায় বাদ্যেরও লড়াই হইত। সে বাদ্যের নাম "সাজ বাজানো"। সাজবাজনার পর "ঠাকুরুণ-বিষয়" বা "শ্যামা-বিষয়"। প্রথমেই শ্যামা-বিষয়ক একটি গান সকলে মিলিয়া গাইবার পর কাটান্দার উক্ত বিষয়ের ছড়া কাটাইতেন। অর্থাৎ ঐ কার্য্যের উপযুক্ত কোনো এক ব্যক্তি উপযুক্ত অঙ্গভঙ্গীর সহিত, কখনো বা সহজ গলায়, কখনো বা এক প্রকার সুরের সাহায্যে, কখনো বা পদ্য, কখনো বা গদ্যের ছুট কথায় উচ্চস্বরে ছড়া বিন্যাস করিতেন। কাটাইতে জানিলে তাহা শুনিয়া শ্রোতৃবর্গের লোমাঞ্চ হইত। ফলতঃ সুকবির রচনা ও সু-কাটান্দার কর্ত্তৃক যোজনা হইলে নানা রস উদ্দীপনার সম্পূর্ণ সম্ভাবনা। ছড়া কাটানো হইলে সকলে মিলিয়া আবার গান।...

শ্যামাবিষয় প্রায় এক ছড়াতেই সমাপ্ত হইত, কিন্তু অনেক দলে দুই তিনটি ছড়া, সুতরাং তিন চারিটি গানও হইত। সে যাহা হউক, ঐ দল শ্যামাবিষয় গাইয়া আপনাদের যন্ত্রাদি সহিত উঠিয়া যাইতেন, প্রতিদ্বন্দ্বী দল আসরে নামিতেন। তাঁহারও ঐরূপ শ্যামা বিষয় শেষ করিয়া উঠিয়া গেলে পুনর্ব্বার পূর্ব্বদল আসিয়া সাজ বাজাইয়া সখীসম্বাদের মহড়া গানটি গাইয়া ছড়া কাটাইতেন। প্রথম ছড়ার পর গান আবার দ্বিতীয় ছড়া ও তৃতীয় গান: আবার তৃতীয় ছড়া ও চতুর্থ গান এইরূপে কয়েকটি ছড়া ও কয়েকটি গানের পর তাঁহাদের প্রস্থান ও অপর দলের প্রবেশ এবং ঐরূপে ছড়া গান হইয়া সখীসম্বাদ মিটিয়া যাইত। পরে বিরহের বেলাও ঐ প্রণালী অবলম্বিত হইত।

একটি কথা বলিতে অবশিষ্ট। যখন যে দল যে প্রসঙ্গের বিন্যাস হেতু আসরে নামিতেন, তখন তাঁহারা যে কয়টা ছড়া ও গান করিতেন, তাহার সমুদয়েতেই সেই একই বিষয়ের আনুপূর্ব্বিক বর্ণনা থাকিত—বিভিন্ন ছড়ায় যে বিভিন্ন বিষয়, তাহা নয়। অর্থাৎ একদল সখীসম্বাদের সময় প্রথম ছড়ায় মাথুর, দ্বিতীয় ছড়ায় মান, তৃতীয় ছড়ায় দান গাইতেন, তাহা হইবার যো নাই—সব ছড়াতে সেই একই প্রসঙ্গ বিবৃত করিতেন।

Such is the Pāṁchāli of the modern type. It is not known in what form it existed in earlier periods, but the kind described began to be popular from the beginning of the 19th century. Dāśarathi Rāy was undoubtedly the greatest, if not the earliest, writer of the group, but it is not beyond doubt whether it was he who first modified its earlier form and set in the new fashion. Before Dāśarathi we get the name of Gaṅgārām Naskar who is sometimes regarded as the founder of this new type; and Guro Dumbo, who is taken by some to be a Pāṁchāli-writer and not a Kabiwālā, certainly flourished prior to Dāśarathi. But of these earlier mysterious figures, nothing practically is known and no specimen of their production has come down to us. After Dāśu Rāy, came Brajamohan Rāy, Sannyāsī Chakrabartī, Nabīn Chakrabartī, Rasik Rāy, Ṭhākur Dās Datta, Gobardhan Dās, Kesab Chāṁd, Nandalāl Rāy, Kṛṣṇadhan Dās, Jadu Ghoṣ and a host of others, who were more or less followers and imitators of Dāśarathi Rāy, their acknowledged head in the line.[1] The latter, therefore, may not be unfittingly described as the great exponent and populariser, if not the originator, of Pāṁchāli in its modern form.

THE FLOURISHING PERIOD OF PĀṀCHĀLI SONGS

Thus, although widely prevalent in the beginning of the 19th century, we get no surviving specimen of Pāṁchāli belonging to the period between 1800 and 1825. Dāśu Rāy himself was born in Māgh 1212 or January-February 1806, and his imitators and followers belong to a period considerably later. Indeed, the most flourishing time of the modern Pāṁchāli was between 1825 and 1860. It was a form of

1 For other Pāṁchāli writers, as well as on Dāśarathi Rāy, see Haripada Chakrabarti, দাশরথি রায় ও তাঁহার পাঁচালী, B.S. 1367 (=1960 A.D.), esp. pp. 512-19. The work collects together the Pāṁchālis of Dāśarathi from various sources, and gives a general survey of Pāṁchāli literature, old and new.

entertainment which began to be popular after the reputation of the Kabiwālās had been already on the decline.

DĀŚARATHI RĀY

It will be convenient to give here a brief account of Dāśarathi Rāy and his works. Dāśarathi was born in 1212 B.S. (=1806 A.D.)[1] His father's name was Devīprasād Rāy; his mother's Śrīmatī Devī. His ancestral home was in বাঁদমুড়া village near Katwa (District Burdwan).[2] He appears to have learnt some English, but he had no regular education in any school or college. He is said to have established his first Pāṁchāli Ākhḍā in 1836 at the age of thirty. He continued his career till his death in 1264 B.S. (=1857 A.D.). The first part of his collected Pāṁchālis was printed in 1897; the second and third parts were published by the Baṅgabāsī Press[3] in 1898.

In Dāśarathi's time a Pālā (i.e. continuous sitting) was arranged on some topic previously fixed upon by both parties, although extemporisation was not excluded. Song, of course, predominated, but there was also exposition of the topic after the manner of the Kathakas. Two themes appear to have been popular, namely, Purāṇic narratives (on various deities Kṛṣṇa, Bhagabatī, etc) and Rāmāyaṇa story, on the one hand, and contemporary social events (e.g. on widow-remarriage etc., on the other. We may arrange his numerous Pālās generally, in accordance with their themes, as follow:

1 *Kṛṣṇa-Carit* (1) জন্মাষ্টমী (2) নন্দোৎসব (3) গোষ্ঠলীলা i-iii (4) কালিয়দমন (5) ব্রহ্মার দর্পচূর্ণ (6) কৃষ্ণকালী বর্ণন (7)

1 There is some dispute about this date.

2 All this we gather from his self-description in various songs. For a full discussion of the various editions of his works, see H. P. Chakrabarti, *op. cit.* p. 123f.

3 The Baṅgabāsī Press edition by Haramohan Mukhopadhyay (4th ed.) contains 64 Pālās, while Gourlal De published 56 Pālās in ten parts. It is difficult to determine the total number of Pālās composed by Dāśarathi. Haripada Chakrabarti in his দাশরথি রায় ও তাঁহার পাঁচালী gives a good selection, at pp. 393-489.

গোপীগণের বস্ত্রহরণ (8) রাধিকার দর্পচূর্ণ (9) নরনারী কুঞ্জর i-ii (10) কলঙ্কভঞ্জন i-ii (11) মানভঞ্জন i-ii (12) অক্রূর-সংবাদ i-ii (13) মথুরা-লীলা i-iii (the third called দূতীসংবাদ) (14) নন্দ-বিদায় (15) উদ্ধব-সংবাদ (16) রুক্মিণী-হরণ (17) সত্যভামার ব্রত (18) গরুড়ের দর্পচূর্ণ (19) দ্রৌপদীর বস্ত্রহরণ (20) দুর্ব্বাসার পারণ (21) প্রভাস-মিলন।

II *Rāmāyaṇa narrative,* (1) রামচন্দ্রের বিবাহ (2) বন-গমন ও সীতাহরণ (3) সীতা-অন্বেষণ (4) তরণীসেন-বধ (5) মায়াসীতা-বধ (6) লক্ষ্মণের শক্তিশেল (7) মহীরাবণ-বধ (8) রাবণবধ (9) রামচন্দ্রের প্রত্যাগমন (10) লবকুশের যুদ্ধ (11) ভগীরথের গঙ্গা-আনয়ন।

III *Other Deities.* (1) প্রহ্লাদ-চরিত্র (2) বামন-ভিক্ষা (3) দক্ষযজ্ঞ (4) গঙ্গা ও ভগবতীর কোন্দল (5) শিব-বিবাহ (6) আগমনী (7) কাশীখণ্ড (8) মহিষাসুর-যুদ্ধ (9) শুম্ভ-নিশুম্ভ-বধ (10) শ্রীমন্তের কমলেকামিনী-দর্শন (11) শ্রীমন্ত ও ধনপতি সদাগরের প্রত্যাগমন (12) শাক্ত ও বৈষ্ণবের দ্বন্দ্ব।

IV *Social events.* (1) বিধবার বিবাহ (2) কর্ত্তাভজা (3) বিরহিণীদের বিরহ-বর্ণন (4) বিরহ (5) স্ত্রীপুরুষের দ্বন্দ্ব; নয়নচাঁদ ও সোনামণি (6) কলিরাজার উপাখ্যান ও চার ইয়ারী (7) বিরহ; প্রেমমণি ও প্রেমচাঁদ (8) নলিনী-ভ্রমর i-ii (9) ব্যাঙের বিরহ।

OTHER PĀṀCHĀLI WRITERS

Brajamohan Rāya's Pāṁchālis have been published in two parts by Durgadas Lahiri in 1313 B.S. (=1906 A.D.). There are altogether 32 Pālās on various topics (including social events). He died at the early age of 45 in 1876 A.D, having been born in 1238 B.S. (=1831 A.D.) in the village তেঁতুলিয়া in Hooghly district.

Rasik Rāy (1820-1892 A.D.). His Pāṁchālis were published in nine parts. He was a voluminous author, having written several works besides Pāṁchālis. He was son of Hari Kamal Rāy of Haripāl in Dt. Hooghly. He had little education but had natural literary gift.

Ṭhākurdās Datta (1801-1876), born at ব্যাটরা village in Dt. Howrah, son of Rāmmohan Datta who was a clerk at Fort William. He wrote many Pālās but they are not available now; it is not known if they were ever printed.

Nandalāl Rāy. His dates are not known. But his 18 Pāṁchālis were published from Baṭtala (Calcutta) in 5 parts. They are on the usual Purāṇic and Rāmāyaṇa topics.

Manomohan Basu (1831-1912). His father's name was Debnārāyaṇ Basu, and his ancestral home was at ছোট জাগুলিয়া in the 24 Pergunnas. He had better education than most writers of his type, having read at Hare School and General Assembly's Institution at Calcutta. He wrote many works including some regular dramas (রামাভিষেক, সতী, প্রণয়পরীক্ষা, হরিশ্চন্দ্র). His *Manomohan-Gītabalī*, from which we have quoted above, was published in 1887.

THE YĀTRĀ: ITS ANTIQUITY AND CHARACTERISTICS

Closely allied to Kabi and Pāṁchāli as a species of popular entertainment was the Yātrā, which appears to have been prevalent from an early period but of which specimens have come down from comparatively recent times. The traditional existence of Yātrās is known to us from time immemorial; and in Bharata's *Nāṭya-śāstra*, we hear of popular semi-dramatic performances which have been generally regarded as the probable precursor of the popular Yātrās, on the one hand, and of the later Sanskrit dramatic literature on the other. In Bhavabhūti's *Mālatī-mādhava*,[1] the word *yātrā* is used probably in the technical sense as well as in the general sense of a festivity. It cannot be determined now whether the Yātrās lineally descended without deviation from these popular festive entertainments of the operatic type obtaining from the earliest times, or whether the later Sanskrit dramatic literature, especially represented in such irregular types as the *Mahānāṭaka* or in the particular operatic

1 *Mālatī-mādhava* (Bomb. Sans. Series Ed.), p. 8.

types noted in all works on Sanskrit dramaturgy, reacted upon it and greatly modified its form and spirit. But it may be noted that the principal elements in the old Yātrā seem to be of indigenous growth, peculiar to itself. In the first place, the Yātrā generally possessed a religious or mythological theme, pointing to a probable connexion with religious festivities and ceremonies. In the next place, although there always existed a dramatic element, the song-element absolutely preponderated, and the choral peculiarities threw into shade its mimetic qualities. And lastly, there were anomalous and grotesque elements in it which indicated a partial absence of the dramatic sense and materially retarded its growth. All these naturally stood in the way of taking the Yātrā out of its operatic structure and evolving the proper dramatic form and spirit ; but these at the same time helped to create by themselves a special nondescript species which cannot be confidently traced back to any known or recognised type of earlier times.

UNDEVELOPED AND CRUDE DRAMATIC ELEMENTS IN THE YĀTRĀ

But the Yātrā, in however crude and undeveloped form, contained within itself the germs of a regular drama. Although the principal theme was drawn from religion or mythology, the realities of scenery and character were not absolutely ignored. It is true that there was hardly any action, and therefore there was little analysis or development of character. There was hardly any scenic apparatus, and all the details were left to the imagination of the audience. But all this was made up for by the gift of communicating life to the persons, the story and the dialogues, as well as by the rich operatic qualities of the performance. With the modern stage-actor or dramatist, the Yātrāwālā never enters into comparison; he is working on a different scene, addressing a different audience and using different tools, colours and methods. Nevertheless, within his limits, he could make his theme inter-

esting and his characters lively by a natural gift of vivid representation. The makeshifts which he used were crude and, taken in detail, his methods were faulty, but he succeeded with all his rude resources in making the whole picture impressive and entertaining to his audience. It is, therefore, quite natural to find the Yātrāwāla making a skilful use of the common yet useful device of mingling the ludicrous and the pathetic in order to add a lively zest to the story. The serious and the comic set off each other and relieve the melodramatic strain of the whole performance. Again, every representation was concerned primarily with the gradual unfolding of a single plot; it never consisted of a disjointed "padding" of unconnected scenes and characters. Through the necessarily slow and elaborate progress of the whole performance, the story was made to stand out clear and alive.

In the midst of all its surroundings and accessories, this was always kept in view in every regular Yātrā. Speaking of the once famous Yātrā of Paramānanda Adhikārī, a writer in the old series of *Baṅgadarśan* lays stress upon the fact that Paramā's Yātrā could never be realised in isolated scenes or songs, inimitably done though they were, but the whole performance had to be witnessed from the beginning to the end. In later periods, mundane subjects and secular themes found their way into the religious Yātrā, and its monotony and seriousness were relieved by the introduction of lively, though conventional, interludes of a farcical nature conducted by characters like Nārada or Madhu Maṅgal. All these indicated the enormous possibilities of the Yātrā for gradually approximating towards the regular drama.

WHY IT DID NOT DEVELOP INTO THE REGULAR DRAMA

In course of time, the drama proper might have, in this way, slowly evolved itself from the indigenous Yātrā, just in the same way as the English drama of the Renaissance evolved itself from the medieval mysteries and miracle-plays.

There were, we have seen, inherent opportunities for such a course of development. The mimetic qualities of a Yātrā, its realistic tendencies, its weaving out of a consistent plot, its taste for a personal and lively dramatic story, its mingling of the comic and the serious—all these traits more or less indicated that the amorphous Yātrā might have passed into an indigenous form of the regular drama. But as a matter of fact it never had done so in its whole course. Indeed, in ancient Bengali literature, inspite of these and other advantages and of the presence of a pattern literature in Sanskrit, we have practically nothing by way of dramatic composition; and the beginning of the stage and the drama in the 19th century Bengal had little connexion with the popular Yātrā.

CONTRAST WITH EUROPEAN MEDIEVAL MYSTERY AND MIRACLE-PLAY

Although dissimilar in many respects, the early Yātrā shows in character and substance some resemblance to the medieval mystery and miracle-play of England, and both had their origin in the popular representation of religious themes. But the conditions of growth and expansion differed considerably in the two cases.

The intellectual readjustment which followed upon the Renaissance in Europe, tended to the gradual secularisation of literature and the creation of a vigorous mundane vitality which could supply the basis of the new theatre. Free belief replaced imposed orthodoxy, moral fervour replaced determined religious practices, energetic action and emotion replaced external and mechanical discipline. With the disappearance of the bondage of mediaevalism, which had forbidden a life of nature and worldly hopes, and with the appearance of the morally and intellectually emancipated man of the Renaissance, life grew into a real thing. Vast and vital changes became manifest in the internal as well as the external world, in society, in politics, in religion, in the

thoughts and aspirations of mankind. The drama was the natural outcome of this rich and manifold life, of this practical and positive movement which had placed literature on a properly human basis.

Bengal, on the other hand, never witnessed such a great movement bringing in its train intellectual, moral and civic emancipation. There was no such univeral awakening or enthusiasm. The external world had never possessed any inherent interest to the naturally stoical and idealistic Hindu, and nothing happened which would take away this inbred apathy. His deep-rooted pessimism with regard to this world and unlimited optimism with regard to the next had produced a stoical resignation, an epicurean indifference and a mystic hope and faith which paralysed personal action, suppressed the growth of external life, and replaced originality by submission. In literature, therefore, which was overwhelmed by the crushing idea of a brooding fate (*adṛṣṭavād*) or of a divinity shaping our ends (*deva-līlā*), religion was the only theme which flourished, and song or recitative poem was the only vehicle which conveyed this religious preoccupation. The prevalence of the rigoristic (*saṃnyās*) ideal and the natural prominence gives to *sāttvik* over the *rājasik* qualities fostered an indifference to mundane activities and an absorption in supermundane affairs which materially hampered free expansion of art, science and literature. A majestic common sense, a rich feeling for the concrete facts and forces of human nature and human life, a sense of enjoyment of the good things of earth, a passion of energy and action are traits which foster material civilisation and arts, but which are antagonistic to Hindu ideas of placid contentment, to the insensibility, amazement and ecstasy of religious devotion, to the wistfulness and pathos of spiritual desire. Even in Sanskrit, complete secularisation of literature and development of poetry and drama could be possible in the more practical, positive and materially civilised age of a Vikramāditya or a Harṣavardhan.

PREPONDERANCE OF OPERATIC AND MELO-DRAMATIC ELEMENTS

But there were drawbacks inherent in the Yātrā itself which stood in the way of its developing into a drama proper. The foremost of these drawbacks was the fact that in the Yātrā, the operatic and the melodramatic elements always preponderated over the dramatic. There was little dialogue, still less action, but there was always an exclusive predominance of songs in which even the dialogues were carried on and the whole action worked out. This overflow of the song-element, no doubt, redeemed much of the incongruities and anomalies of the Yātrā, but it also told seriously on the development of its dramatic elements by tending to destroy, in a flood of music and musical episodes, all considerations of dramatic probability and propriety. The peculiar mode of singing *chaupadīs* or the *mahājana-padas* by '*pattan*' or devising the peculiar variations of a *tukko* in the music of the *kīrtan* was utilised by every Yātrākar for entrancing his audience. An expert and skilful Yātrāwālā, however, did not always choose to walk in this beaten way, and we learn that in the Yātrā of Paramā, already mentioned, there was less music and more dialogue—a device which was meant to infuse a dramatic interest into the story. And yet it is well-known that the chief attraction of the Yātrā consisted in its songs, and that there was nothing more delightful than Paramā's famous *tukko* whose musical quality no other Yātrāwālā is said to have ever surpassed. A very considerable portion of ancient Bengali literature consisted of songs and poems which could be recited or chanted, and the Yātrā in its peculiar lyric quality, strictly conformed to this widely prevalent lyric propensity. The influences which moulded national life and national characteristics helped rather than checked this universal tendency, and there was absolutely nothing which could lift the Yātrā out of its religious envelopment or its musical structure.

The Yātrā, again, began to be extremely popular from a

literary period which powerfully contributed to its lyric and religious tendencies. The earliest reference to the Yātrā probably dates from the Baiṣṇab era. But Baiṣṇabism, if it humanised literature to a certain extent, hardly ever secularised it. It only intensified the religious ardour of the people and brought with it a mass of lyric and mystic literature, which was not only alien in its essence to the drama but which also encouraged the musical, melodramatic and religious predilections of the Yātrā. The Baiṣṇab poets, no doubt, brought new ideas and novel modes of art, but it is hardly correct to designate the Baiṣṇab era as the Renaissance period of Bengal.[1] It would be out of place to discuss this point here in detail; but it may be pointed out that at least in the literary sphere, Baiṣṇabism was not a universal movement and its influence on contemporary and subsequent literature was never wide. In estimating this influence on the literature of the 17th and 18th centuries we must guard against the error of regarding it in the magnifying perspective in which we view it in the 19th or the 20th century, in which this influence has been very marked. Baiṣṇabism never disturbed seriously the uninterrupted course of Bengali literature from the earliest time down to the 18th century. Side by side with Baiṣṇab songs and lyrics flourished the traditional *chaṇḍī-poems, manasār gān, dharma-maṅgal, śibāyan,* which in form and spirit bear little kinship with Baiṣṇab productions and which affiliate themselves with the earlier and later poetical literature of Bengal. Even a century later, we find the same tradition carried on in the *Padmābatī* of Ālāol, *Durgā-pañcha-rātri* of Jagat Rām, *Śibāyan* of Rāmeśvar, *Annadā-maṅgal* of Bhāratchandra, *Gaṅgābhakti-taraṅgiṇī* of Durgā Prasād—all of which show little direct influence of Baiṣṇab ideas or Baiṣṇab forms of art. The socio-ethical ideas of Baiṣṇabism, no doubt, inaugurated a new line of culture; but its cosmopolitanism, its ideal of universal love and its theory of emotional realisa-

1 Sāradacharaṇ Mitra in *Sāhitya*, 1315 B.S.

tion were antagonistic to the development of nationality or of national ideas. Instead of a full-blooded dramatic literature, it gave us a mass of resplendent religious-amatory lyrics.

INFLUENCE OF BAIṢṆABISM ON IT

The influence of Baiṣṇabism, therefore, was hardly favourable to the development of the inherent dramatic elements in the Yātrā ; on the other hand, it cherished its musical peculiarities, developed its melodramatic tendency, and emphasised its religious predilections. Indeed, we find the Baiṣṇabas utilising the popular Yātrā as a means of representing Kṛṣṇa-līlā and diffusing its novel ideas. The earliest Yātrā of which we have any mention relate to such themes, and was known technically and universally as the *Kṛṣṇa-yātrā.* In early Bengali literature prior to Chaitanya, no doubt, there prevailed songs relating to Śaiva and Śākta cults ; and it is probable that with these prevailed also *Śiba-yātrā* and *Chaṇḍī-yātrā,* traces of which we find even in 18th century, and probably also *Rām-yātrā* which had, however, no kinship with the spectacular Rām-līlā prevalent in the upper provinces. It is extremely difficult, in the absence of data, to speak confidently on the subject; but it seems that in course of time, with the advent of Baiṣṇab ideas, Kṛṣṇa-yātrā overshadowed all other kinds and became absolutely supreme. The generic name of this Yātrā was *Kāliya-daman Yātrā* which, however, in spite of its name, related not only to this particular feat of Kṛṣṇa but included also *dān, mān, māthur* and other well-known *līlās.* These Yātrās were preceded, as the *Kīrtan* of the Baiṣṇabas were (*taduchita gaurachandra*), by the recitation or singing of a *gaura-chandrī*—a term which unmistakably connects it with Gaurachandra or Chaitanya. In *Chaitanya-maṅgal* and *Chaitanya-bhāgabat*[1] mention is

1 *Chaitanya-bhāgabat*, ed. Atulkṛṣṇa Gosvāmī, pp. 283-291. The expression used is আজি করিবাঙ নৃত্য অঙ্কের বিধানে, from which as well as from the account given, it is not clear whether it was a Yātrā

made of a Yātrā-festivity organised by Chaitanya himself in the house of Chandraśekhar Āchārya. The history of Bengali Yātrā, therefore, is closely connected with that of Baiṣṇab literature in general, and it would not be incorrect to say that Baiṣṇabism supplied the Yātrā with themes for several centuries, and confirmed, if it did not directly give it, its operatic and melodramatic qualities.

These qualities persisted practically throughout its whole history. But in course of time we find the Yātrā, inspite of these drawbacks, gradually developing its crude dramatic elements. After the Baiṣṇab era, the earliest well-known Yātrāwālā was Paramānanda Adhikārī, a native of Birbhum, who flourished probably in the 18th century and carried on the tradition of Kāliyadaman Yātrā. There was a greater amount of acting and dialogues in this Yātrā, although song, melodrama and Baiṣṇab themes were not altogether discarded. The tradition was continued by Sudām Adhikārī and Lochan Adhikārī, the latter specially excelling in the delineation of *Akrūra-saṃbād* and *Nimāi-saṃnyās*—themes which possessed greater human interest than the conventional *dān, mān, māthur* of Śrīkṛṣṇa. Gobinda Adhikārī of Krishnanagar, Pītāmbar Adhikārī of Katwa and Kālāchāṁd Pāl of Bikrampur, Dacca, were comparatively recent exponents of the same Kṛṣṇa-yātrā, But the other species—*Rām-Yātrā, Chaṇḍī-Yātrā, Mansār Bhāsān Yātrā*—were not totally extinct. Guruprasād Ballabh of Farasdanga and Lāusen Bādal of Burdwan gained considerable reputation in *Chaṇḍī-Yātrā* and *Mansār Bhāsān Yātrā*, respectively ; while *Rām-Yātrā*, obtained celebrity in the hands of Premchāṁd Adhikārī, Ānanda Adhikārī and Jayachandra Adhikārī, of Pāṭāihāṭā. No specimen, except a few scattered songs, has been preserved of these earlier Yātrā-wālās.

which was performed on this occasion or whether it was a regular Sanskrit drama (like the Baiṣṇab plays *Jagannātha-vallabha, Dānakeli-kaumudī* or *Vidagdha-mādhava* in Bengali version) which was enacted on this occasion.

THE YĀTRĀ IN THE BEGINNING OF THE 19TH CENTURY

Such is the history of the Yātrā up to the beginning of the 19th century. After these professional Yātrās, come varieties of modern Yātrās, chiefly amateur parties (*sakher dal*), in which, inspite of their profusion of instrumental and vocal music, dramatic ideas and methods were slowly evolving themselves. Beltalā Eṁḍedār Yātrā or the Yātrā of Gopāl Uḍe may be cited as instances. In imitation of prologues in Sanskrit drama, we have, in these, a farcical introduction, as well as interludes in which laughable, though often vulgar, characters like Kāluā Bhuluā, Methar and Methrāṇī began to figure. Again, we have here for the general theme not *Kṛṣṇa-līlā* as in *Kāliya-daman Yātrā* or even *Chaṇḍī-līlā, Rām-līlā* or *Mansār Kathā*, but essentially secular themes of mythology or fiction such as Nala-damayantī or Bidyā-sundar began to be prominent; and later on with the degeneration of the Yātrā in tone, temper and style, Bidyā-sundar alone became the prevalent theme.

The existing specimens of the Yātrā all belong to this late period in its history. Although the Yātrā appears to have been prevalent from the Baiṣṇab era down to the middle of the 19th century, the earlier specimens have not been preserved. We know nothing of these earlier Yātrāwālās and their productions, excepting some general accounts which we incidentally get here and there. Even all the best known Yātrāwālās of the 19th century, whose productions have, in a more or less complete form, come down to us, belong to a comparatively recent time, to the period between 1825 and 1850. The Yātrāwālās, flourishing between 1800 and 1825, some of whom have been already mentioned, are known only by name and reputation, and even all the names are not known. This form of literature, like the production of the Kabiwālās, was extemporised and was meant to contribute to the transient pleasure of its audience; and much of it was of the ephemeral type. The remarks already made on this aspect of the Kabi-song apply with equal force to the

case of the Yātrā and, like the Kabi-songs, it degenerated considerably in style and temper. No attempt was ever made to preserve them in print, and much of this literature is now lost. Of the few well-known Yātrāwālās, however, whose work has been more or less embodied in print, Kṛṣṇa Kamal Gosvāmī was born in 1810, Gopāl Uḍe about 1819 and Gobinda Adhikārī in 1798.

Dinesh Chandra Sen in his two works on Bengali Literture[1] has given a fairly full account of Kṛṣṇakamal. He was born of a Vaidya family at Bhajanghāṭ in Nadia district about 1217 B. S. (=1810 A. D.). His ancestral home was in East Bengal. His father Muralīdhar Gosvāmī took him to Brindaban at the age of seven and then to Navadvipa. He died in January 1883 (১২ মাঘ ১২৯০ সাল) at Chinsurah. Of his many works his স্বপ্নবিলাস (1835) seems to be the earliest; it was followed by রাই উন্মাদিনী and সুবলসংবাদ which had some popularity in East Bengal. His works were published by his grandson Kāminī Kumār Gosvāmī.

Gobinda Adhikārī (Bairāgī) was born in the village of Jaṅgīpāḍā (near Khānākul-Kṛṣṇanagar) in Hooghly district about 1205 B. S. (=1798 A. D.). He had very little education but had a good voice and natural gift for composing songs. He learnt Kīrtān from Golok Chandra Adhikārī of ধুয়খালী village and joined his Kīrtan party. Later on he started his own party which he soon turned into a Yātrā party. His first Pālā is said to have been কালিয়দমন.[2] He appears to have become rich, and came to live in Salkhia near Howrah, where he died at the age of 72 in 1870 A.D.

Gopāl Dās of Karaṇ caste[3], son of Mukunda, hailed

1 বঙ্গভাষা ও সাহিত্য (১৩০৪), pp. 538-43: *Hist. of Beng. Lit.* pp. 733-43.

2 Some of his songs will be found in বাঙ্গালীর গান pp. 321-31.

3 He is better known as Gopāl Uḍe. His Vidyāsundar Yātrā songs were published by Harimohan Mukhopadhyay from the Bangabasi Press in 1317 B.S. (=1910 A.D.). Also in বাঙ্গালীর গান pp. 360-99.

from Yājpur, near Cuttack, Orissa. In his eạrly life he used to be a street-vendor selling ripe plantain (চাঁপা কলা). It is said that Biśvanāth Matilāl, a rich man who loved music, heard Gopāl's street-cry and recognised the Gāndhāra Rāg (গান্ধার বলেছে চাঁপা কলা চাই). He called Gopāl, and at his recommendation Rādhāmohan Sarkār of Bowbazar (Calcutta) took Gopāl into his party, which was patronised by Rājā Nabakṛṣṇa of Sobhabazar. Gopāl died at the early age of 40 in 1859 A.D.

It will be convenient to mention here Madhu Kān or Madhusūdan Kinnar, although he was not strictly a Yātrā-wālā. He was born in 1225 (=1818 A.D.) in উলুশিয়াই village in Bangrām (Dt. Jessore). His father's name was Tilak Chandra Kinnar. He learnt music in youth at Dacca. From Rādhā-mohan Bāul of রাড়খাদিয়া (Dt. Jessore) he learnt Ḍhap songs, which absorbed some features of Kīrtan. He died at the early age of 50 in 1275 B.S. (=1868 A.D.) in Krishnanagar where he had gone to sing. His songs will be found collected in বাঙ্গালীর গান (Durgadas Lahiri), Bangabasi Press, Calcutta 1905 pp. 332-360.

It was about this time or little later that the Yātrā had already begun to degenerate. This degeneration was almost synchronous with and was therefore hastened by the change of taste and literary fashion of the 19th century which came to regard all these old forms of literature as out of date and contemptible. With the spread of new ideas and new literary methods, a regular stage was gradually established, and dramas, written in imitation of European models, tolled the death-knell of the old Yātrā which still lingered but never found the same place in popular favour. It is not surprising, therefore, that in the preface to his *Ratnābalī*, one of the earliest Bengali dramas written for this new stage, Rām-nārāyaṇ Tarkaratna, himself an orthodox Paṇḍit, speaks in contemptuous terms of the popular Yātrā and votes in favour of the new drama based on Sanskrit and English models.

APPENDIX I

[*See p. 39 foot-note*; *p. 108, foot-note 2*]

OLD BENGALI PROSE

Though prose is more obviously natural to man in conversation, it is only after considerable experience that he realises its utility as a medium of formal writing. Bengali literature is no exception to this rather commonplace "verse-first-prose-afterwards" adage of literary history. Our fore-fathers from the very earliest times, no doubt, spoke in prose, but it is possible to use prose without knowing or thinking about it, and the late development of prose-writing in Bengali follows generally the order of development in almost all languages. Indeed, the achievement of early Bengali prose is not only very late but, speaking generally, it amounts to almost nothing: such achievement as there is, for several centuries, is in verse. Poetry attained a considerable degree of maturity while we have nothing but a mere lisping of prose. This preponderance of one form of writing partially explains and is explained by the extreme poverty of the other; but it is more than a case of preponderance, it is one of monopoly. It may almost be said that there is not a single piece of spirited prose of the profane kind in Bengali from the earliest times to the beginnings of the 19th century; whatever exists of other kinds is again late, scanty, and for the most part, frankly unsatisfactory.

Not only the bulk of early prose literature is late and scanty but it is not yet quite reasonably clear that what has come down exemplifies very fairly the whole upon which we may fully form an estimate. Much of early Bengali prose, like its verse, is lost; much again yet remains to be unearthed. The only specimen of very early prose which probably goes beyond the 16th century is to be found in the few doubtful passages interspersed in the verses *Śūnya Purāṇ* and perhaps

in the apocryphal work attributed to Chaṇḍīdās ; other prose specimens, mostly cryptic and mystical writings of the Sahajiyā sect, together with a little good prose-writing of other kinds, may all be taken to be productions of late 18th century, none of them certainly going beyond the 17th. Any attempt to estimate the development attained by old Bengali prose, as shown by these scanty remains, must of necessity be somewhat superficial and incomplete, not only in view of the fragmentary nature of much of these writings but also because of the difficulties of chronology. Most of these manuscripts are undated and show considerable differences of reading. Nature of the script and general style of composition are at best unsafe guides, not only in themselves, but also because the one is not yet a matter of systematic study while the characteristic specimens of the other in different periods are not yet available. Even when the manuscripts are dated, the exact relation of the manuscript to the date of composition it is almost impossible to determine. These difficulties are multiplied, again, by the presence of divergent readings in different manuscripts of the same work. It is needless to say that unless we can stand upon firm and sure ground in matters of chronology, not to speak of insufficiency of materials to go upon, we can hardly expect to form a correct and critical estimate of our subject of study, and all our attempts in this direction are at best nothing more than tentative.

The earliest specimen of Bengali prose is supposed to be the short passages in Rāmāi (or Ramāi) Paṇḍit's *Śūnya Purāṇ*, the manuscript of which is placed by its editor (Sāhitya Pariṣat edition) in the 17th century, although the so-called prose passages, if not the verse, reveal a much earlier and more antique form of diction. If the language of the recently published *Śrī-Kṛṣṇa-kīrttan* belongs to the early part of the 14th century,[1] we can safely assume that the prose of *Śūnya*

1 Preface to *Kṛṣṇakīrttan* ; H. P. Shastri in *Calcutta Review*, pp. 392-93.

Purāṇ must have had its origin in a somewhat earlier age; and the supposition is not unlikely that the passages, as we have them, may contain traces of the original writings of Rāmāi Paṇḍit, going back to at least 13th century A.D.,[1] varied and modified, it may be, by later scribal and other interferences. It would be interesting to examine these ancient specimens critically, but such examination is beset with difficulties not only on account of the frankly unintelligible vocabulary and crabbed syntax, considerable corruption of the text rightly commented upon by many a critic, but also because of the exclusive and esoteric doctrines they embody, which seem to create a language of their own whose meaning is all but lost to us. Here is a portion of the celebrated passage on বারমাসি:

কোন মাসে কোন রাসি। চৈত্র মাসে মীনরাসি। হে কালিন্দিজল বার ভাই বার আদিত্ত। হথ পাতি লহ সেবকর অর্ঘ পুষ্পপানি। সেবক হব স্থখি আমনি ধীমাৎ কম্নি। গুরু পণ্ডিত দেউল্যা দানপতি। সাংস্থর ভোক্তা আমনি সন্ন্যাসী গতি জাইতি গাএন বাএন তুআরি তুয়ার-পাল ভাণ্ডারী ভাণ্ডারীপাল রাজদূত কোমি কোটাল পরে সুখ মুকতি এহি দেউলে পড়িব জঅ জঅকার। দাতার দানপতির বিঘ্ন জাব নাস। কোন মাসে কোন রাশি। বৈশাখ মাসে মেস রাসি। হে বসুদেব বার ভাই বার আদিত্ত হাত পাতি লেহ সেবকর পুষ্পপানি। সেবক হব স্থখি আমনি ধামাৎ কম্নি। গুরু পণ্ডিত দেউলা দানপতি সাংস্থর ভোক্তা আমনি সন্ন্যাসী গতি জাইতি গাএন বাএন তুআরি তুআরপাল ভাণ্ডারী ভাণ্ডারপাল রাজদূত কোমি কোটাল পাবেক স্থখ মুকতি। এহি দেউলে পড়িব জঅ জআকার। দাতা দানপতির বিঘ্ন জাব নাস। কোন মাস কোন রাসি। বৈসাখ গেলে জৈষ্ট মাসে বৃস রাসি।

and so forth through all the months of the year in the same strain.

On first reading this fantastic piece of apparently un-

1 H. P. Shastri, *op. cit.* p. 394.

rhythmical writing would hardly seem to be prose at all ; and it has been doubted if it is prose or verse or none, or a curious admixture of the two. But a careful study will make it clear that is not verse in any sense but probably prose, although it may be prose of a kind unfamiliar to us, and that it has a distinct rhythm of its own. When carefully examined, this and other passages, if the text is correct, will reveal that here for the first time there is a perception, however faint, of the existence of distinct styles of prose and verse, although the instruments of the two harmonies may not have been very clearly differentiated[1]. In order to understand the nature of this passage, we must bear in mind that the connexion between old Bengali verse and old Bengali prose was extraordinarily close. There was a time, indeed, when writers of this literature hardly ever recognised the separate existence of prose as a vehicle of expression, classifying it, in theory,

1 All these speculations are based on the assumption that what the passages embody is really prose. They have been always taken as such, but our own suspicion is that they are really verse-lines, perhaps imperfectly recorded fragments, not properly examined or shifted with care when the text was edited and printed from the original MSS. Unfortunately we had no access to the original manuscripts, in the possession of the editor, upon which the text is chiefly based, and had to depend entirely upon the Sāhitya Pariṣat edition which is anything but what scientific scholarship would desire. There is no attempt to render the passages intelligible in spite of the addition of a very imperfect glossary. The text is suspiciously corrupt, and the editor himself acknowledges that he had no time to collate the three manuscripts with the published text but that he had got it done by his Paṇḍits. There is nowhere any indication of variations of reading given by the different manuscripts utilised, nor any attempt even to determine the correct reading. This renders the edition entirely valueless to a scientific student. The *Śūnya Purāṇ*, as it stands now, is an extremely difficult book to edit with all its indispensable critical apparatus, and the Sāhitya Pariṣat must be praised for its boldness in undertaking to reprint it ; but one would wish that the scholarship displayed in bringing out this edition had been equal to the boldness of this difficult undertaking.

as a species of poetry itself and calling it গদ্যছন্দ or prose-metre and, in practice, making their prose, with alliteration, balanced accent and other devices, look as much like their own verse as possible. It is a well-known fact that much of this prose, like the passage just quoted, interspersed in the midst of verse, was consciously adapted not only to read like verse but to be sung or chanted after the manner of Kathakas or rhapsodists. It is curious to note in this connexion that in many of these prose pieces we find the *bhaṇitā* or signature of their respective authors in the same way as we find them in their poetical compositions.

Anyone, studying the passage already quoted and those that follow even with moderate attention, will have no difficulty in agreeing to what has been said as to the close relation between early prose and verse. Not only the condensed mode and order of verse is followed here, but the symmetry of the lines, turns of phrases peculiar to verse, the refrain-like repetition of sentences, the very frequent intrusion of half-staves or full verse-lines (like দাতার দানপত্তির বিঘ্ন জাব নাস or এহি দেউলে পড়িব জত্ত জন্তাকার) capable of accurate scansion, occasional occurrence of end-rhymes, and lastly, the muffled under-hum of verse-rhythm throughout—all indicate that the passage, in its close approach to the rhythm and tune of poetry, was meant, if it is prose at all, to be chanted with the verses to which it was only an appendage. Here is another passage, more intelligible and more varied, in which the characteristics already indicated are more prominent:

হে জয়সন্ধ হে বিজঅসন্ধ তুহ্মি সংখ হইএ চিরাই। তুহ্মার জলে স্নান করেন শ্রীধর্ম্ম গোসাঞি। অভিসেক জলে স্নান মনখির কৈসের পাবন সইতের পাবন সচল অচল সৃষ্টি সৃজিলেন গোসাঞি ভকতবৎসল। সুবর্ন্নের কোদাল রূপার বাঁট। মহাদেব কুদালেন স্বর্গ মর্ত্ত পাতাল। জটার কুলে পেলেন নীর সে নীর লইয়া দসমস্ত গতি বাখানি। ব্রহ্মা হইলেন পণ্ডিত বিষ্টু হইলেন কম্মি মহাদেব মেলি করেন জলপাবন। মূলপাবন স্থলপাবন

গোষ্ঠীপাবন ছায়াপাবন পণ্ডিতপাবন উত্তর দখিন পূব পচ্চিম পাবন। জীত্তাপাবন কায়াপাবন মুণ্ডপাবন ধড়পাবন। স্ববন্নর পুস্কর্ণি রূপার ঘাট এহি ফুল জলে স্তান করেন শ্রীদেব করতার। আদ্দপতি অনাদ্দপতি করিব সার। এহি সুদ্ধ পাটে ধর্ম্মর আগুসার। অস্সথ বেল পলাস মোউলর পাত। সিনান করেন পরভু তিদসর নাথ। স্তান সন্ধা গোসাঞির চাম্পান দিব ঘাট (?)। ধবল সিংহাসন গোসাঞর ধবল পাট। উরিলেন গোসাঞি ঝলমল করিএ কন্ধে নবগুন পৈতা।

It will be noticed that in this passage there are lines at the beginning and at the end, which form distinct couplets having regular end-rhymes. The opposite tendency of having rhythmic prose lines in the midst of verse will be exemplified in the lines on অধিবাস to be found at p. 61 of the Sāhitya Pariṣat edition. The following again is a curious illustration of mixed prosaic-poetic style:

কেহ মাটি কাটে কেহ পাথর চাঁছে হাতী মাড়মর পটা কাটিআ ছিড়িয়া মাপিআ জখিআ সত হাতে হইল পোতা। রাত্তিত পাথর চারি পাতি কর কতে হল সুদ সুনার আড়া। কাঞ্চন বাঁধিয়া মেজে করিল কাট ভাল (? কাচ-ঢাল)। মণ্ডপে ফটিকের থাম লাগে চন্দন নাদন। আর সাত ডকে (?) লাগিল গজান। ইলা মণ্ডপে দপ্পন সভা করে। বেরাল পাটর গাটী সুনার কড়ি লাগে রূপার বাখারি ছিটিকে তথির উপরে বেরাল পাটর গাটী সভা করে গোড়ি বসে থরে থর। মউয় পুচ্ছর ছাউনি ধর্ম্মর ঘর। বেরাল পাটর গাটি পিড়াঅ সভা করে। সুনার কলস তথি উড়এ নেতর ধুতি। সুনার কলস নেতর পতাকা দিল জে তুলিআ জুই মূর্ত্তি হএ কামিন্যা বিসাস্তর আনাইল অন্তরীখে। শ্রীধর্ম্ম চরণগুনে শ্রীজুত রামাই ভনে হঅ কবি অনাস্তর দাস। অর্চ্চনা করিআ ভাব পূজ নিরঞ্জনে জদি হব ভবনদী পার।

These passages, it must be admitted, are not fine literary specimens by themselves but, to a student of literary history, their formal importance is very great. They illustrate, if not anything else, at least the fact that prose has not yet fully

emerged itself and come into prominence, at that particular stage, as a distinct mode of writing, although there is at the same time a faint indication of such understanding in the literary mind. This is not what we understand by prose-poetry or poetical prose, but the instruments of the two harmonies are so nearly identical that the products slide and grade off into one another very easily and undistinguishably. This may be called the beginning of prose—a curious literary phenomenon of which not many instances may be found in the early prose of other languages and which leaves little doubt as to the value and relative antiquity of the specimens of question. We see here the early stages in the process by which prose is slowly evolving itself out of poetry and asserting its right to recognition as a medium of expression altogether distinct from verse. It is a matter of regret, however, that we cannot trace other stages in this process as we do not possess any documents of prose-writing of this or subsequent periods until we came to the 16th century.

One of the curious effects of these intermixture of prosaic and poetic styles is the idea, however imperfect, or rhythmical arrangement in these prose passages. Of course, verse and prose rhythms have entirely different values and the harmony of the one is not always desirable in the other: yet, if it is not rash to dogmatise in the absence of any but slight and scrappy knowledge of the phonetics of early Bengali, we cannot mistake the fine effect of symphonic arrangement (partly due to the presence of versicles) which the lines, perhaps unconsciously, attain. Of actual syntax there may not be much: nor is there any attempt at balance of phrase or periodic sentence-framing, although there is certainly a knowledge of the value of short and long sentences ; but the very fact that the passages were meant as appendages to verse and composed with the not unlikely object of being sung gives them a peculiar rhythmic effect, rudimentary yet not childish, which it is impossible to ignore.

The apocryphal prose piece, *Chaitya Rūpa Prāpti* passing

under the name of Chaṇḍīdās does not, from our point of view, require any special examination. The following passage:

চৈতন্যরূপের রা চ অধরূপ লাড়ি। রা অক্ষরে রাগ লাড়ি। চ অক্ষরে চেতন লাড়ি। র এতে চ মিশিল রা এতে বসিল। ইবে এক অঙ্গা লাড়ি। রাগ রতি। লাড়ির নাম সুধা॥ সেই লাড়ি সাতাইশ প্রকার।

will sufficiently indicate the same admixture of prose and verse-forms—and indeed we have a reference in the *Pada-kalpataru* to গদ্যপদ্যময় রচনা of Chaṇḍīdās—but the sentences are shorter and the vocables more modern. The manuscript is dated 1674 and it is probable that the language does not go much earlier than this date. The frigid drip of doctrinaire talk—for it professes to explain Tāntrik theories in riddle-like language and brief aphoristic sentences, almost always dropping the verb and seldom running beyond three or four words at a time—does not seem to allow much scope for the prose either to run fluently or to evince any remarkable literary aptitude.

This bare dry fatiguing aphoristic manner is illustrated by a body of so-called philosophic writings relating to the Sahajiyā cult, which belong in all probability to the 17th and the 18th centuries. The first work that calls for mention in this group is the curious manuscript called *Deha-kaḍacha*, attributed to Narottam Ṭhākur, the text of which was published in the *Sāhitya Pariṣat Patrikā* (1304, no. 1, pp. 39-46). The date of the manuscript is 1603 Śaka (1681 A D.), and this date as well as the similarity of style and manner would place the work in the age in which the last mentioned Chaṇḍīdās apocrypha was written. The text of this manuscript, however, seems to be almost identical (making due allowance to trifling scribal and other variations) with that of *Ātma-jijñāsā*, ascribed to Kṛṣṇadās (Sāhitya Pariṣat manuscript no. 1474).[1] The vexed question of

1 See *Sāhitya Pariṣat Patrikā*, 1306, no. 1, p. 49 and no. 4, p. 327; *ibid* 1305, p. 197; *ibid*, 1304, no. 4, p. 302.

authorship or the sources of the works in question, their origin in an earlier *Svarūpa-kalpataru*, does not concern us here in the least; nor have we anything to do with their literary associations with the doctrines, real or imaginary, of the Sahajiyā cult and its mystical sublimation. What concerns us most is that Narottam, if Narottam he was, or Kṛṣṇadās, if Kṛṣṇadās there was, wrote in a severely scholastic manner, bare, dry and aphoristic, abounding in technicalities, which may be suited for doctrinal exposition but which hardly shows any attempt, conscious or unconscious, at producing either style or rhythm. Here is a characteristic specimen from the beginning of *Deha-kaḍcha*, with the corresponding additions and variations in brackets from the text of *Ātma-jijñāsā*:[1]

শ্রীশ্রীরাধাকৃষ্ণায় নমঃ [শ্রীশ্রীরাধাকৃষ্ণ]। [অথো আপ্তজিগাসা।] তুমি কে। [আমি কে।] আমি জীব [জিব]। তুমি কোন জীব [কোন জিব]। আমি তটস্থ জিব॥ থাকেন [থাক] কোথা [কথা] ভাণ্ডে। ভাণ্ড কীরূপে [কিরুপে] হইল। তত্ত্ব [তর্ত্ত] বস্তু [বস্তুতে] হৈতে [হৈল]। তত্ত্ব বস্তু কি কি [কি কি তর্ত্তবস্তু]। পঞ্চ [পঞ্চভূ] আত্মা। একাদশেন্দ্র [একাদষ ইন্দ্রি]। ছয় রিপু ইচ্ছা [জ্ঞান] এই সকল য়েক [এক] যোগে [জোগে হৈল] ভাণ্ড হৈল। পঞ্চাত্মা কে [পঞ্চভূআত্মা কাখে বলি]। প্রিথিবী আপ তেজঃ বাউ আকাশ [আপু তেজ বাউ বর্জ্জ আকাশ এই পঞ্চ]॥ একাদশীন্দ্র কে কে [একাদস ইন্দ্রি (য়) না(ম) কি]। কর্ম্ম ইন্দ্র পাঁচ [কর্ম্ম পঞ্চ ইন্দ্রি)। জ্ঞানীন্দ্র পাঁচ (জ্ঞান পঞ্চ ইন্দ্রি)। আবরন এক (মন এই একাদস ইন্দ্রি)॥

In the same strain is the following from the *Kārikā*

1 The text of *Ātma-jijñāsā* here follows that of the Sāhitya Pariṣat manuscript (no. 1474). Other manuscripts noticed in the *Patrikā* (referred to in footnote above) give slightly different readings.

supposed to be written by Rūpa Gosvāmī, which is noticed in the *Bāndhab*, 1289 B.S. (p. 369):[1]

শ্রীশ্রীরাধাবিনোদ জয়। অথ বস্তুনির্ণয়। প্রথম শ্রীকৃষ্ণের গুণনির্ণয়। শব্দগুণ গন্ধগুণ রূপগুণ রসগুণ স্পর্শগুণ এই পাঁচগুণ। এই পঞ্চগুণ শ্রীমতী রাধিকাতেও বসে। শব্দগুণ কর্ণে গন্ধগুণ নাসাতে রূপগুণ নেত্রে রসগুণ অধরে ও স্পর্শগুণ অঙ্গে। এই পঞ্চগুণে পূর্ব্বরাগের উদয়। পূর্ব্বরাগের মূল দুই। হঠাৎ শ্রবণ ও অকস্মাৎ দর্শন।

There are several other works, *Āśraya-nirṇaya*[2], *Ātma-nirūpaṇa*[3], *Svarūpa-varṇana*[4], *Rāgamayī-kaṇā*[5], much later productions, but all attributed, after the ancient manner of lumping all anonyma upon a single apocryphal figure of traditional repute, to Kṛṣṇadās. They exhibit the same charac-

1 The text as given here, apparently modernised in spelling, follows that given in *Bāndhab* and quoted also by Dinesh Chandra Sen in his *Baṅga-Bhāṣa O Sāhitya*, 2nd Ed., p. 628. The text as quoted above occurs also in a manuscript called রাগমালা by Narottam Dās, as follows: অথ উদ্দীপন কৃষ্ণগুণ নির্ণয়। রাধাকৃষ্ণ গুণনিরূপণ। শব্দ গন্ধ রূপ রস ও স্পর্শ এবং পঞ্চবিধ এবং রাধিকায়াঃ পঞ্চবিধা কর্ণে শব্দগুণ ১। নেত্রে রূপগুণ ২। নাসাতে গন্ধগুণ ৩। অধরে রসগুণ ৪। অঙ্গে স্পর্শগুণ ৫। etc.

See *Sāhitya Pariṣat Patrikā*, 1306, no. 3, p. 251: also p. 67.

2 There are two manuscripts of this work in the Sāhitya Pariṣat (nos. 331 and 1471). The following quotation is taken from earlier manuscript no. 1471 (dated 1247 B.S.) See also notice of this work in *Sāhitya Pariṣat Patrikā*, 1304, no. 4, p. 303, in which mention is also made of another manuscript dated 1098 B.S. See also *Patrikā* 1308, p. 53, where this work is attributed to Narottama.

3 Sāhitya Pariṣat manuscript no. 332 (dated 1247 B.S.). See also *Sāhitya Pariṣat Patrikā*, 1304, no. 4, p. 802 (where the date of the manuscript noticed is 1218 B.S.) and *ibid*, 1306, no. 1, p. 49.

4 *Sāhitya Pariṣat Patrikā*, 1305, no. 1, p. 80; *ibid* 1304, no. 6 pp. 343-4 (manuscript dated 1081 B.S): *ibid* 1306, no. 1, p. 79 (manuscripts dated 1164 and 1246 B.S.)

5 *Sāhitya Pariṣat Patrikā*, 1304, no. 4, pp. 333-34; *ibid*, 1306, p. 66. See *Patrikā* 1308, pp. 40-41 where passages are quoted from other prose works viz., *Saraṇi-ṭīkā* and *Sādhanāśraya*.

teristic disjointed style, peculiar to this kind of 17th and 18th century writings. It is needless to multiply quotations but one or two short specimens would not be quite out of place :

অথ ব্রজে পঞ্চভাব ॥ সান্ত ১ দাস্য ২ সখ্য ৩ বাৎস্তল্য ৪ মধুর ৫ এই পঞ্চভাব। সান্তের পাত্র কে। সনকাদি মুনিগণ। গুণ কি নিষ্ঠাগুন। দাস্যের পাত্র ঋৈস্বর্য্যে হনুমান ঠাকুর। মাধুর্য্যে ব্রজে সর্ব্বে এবং গোপীগন। গুণ কি সেবা। সখ্যের পাত্র কে। ঐসর্য্যে অর্জ্জুন ঠাকুর। মাধুর্য্যে শ্রীদাম সুদামাদি। গুন কি সমতাগুণ। বাচ্ছল্যের পাত্র কে ॥ ঋৈসর্য্যে বসুদেব দ্বৈবকি॥ মাধুর্য্যে নন্দ জসোদা। গুণ কি মমতাগুন। মধুর ভাবের পাত্র শ্রীরাধিকা এবং ব্রজাঙ্গনা সকল ॥ গুন কি শ্রিঙ্গার। ধাম চারি প্রকার। শ্রীবৃন্দাবন ১ গোলক ২ মথুরা ৩ দ্বারকা ৪। শ্রীবৃন্দাবনের পাত্র শ্রীনন্দনন্দন। গোলকে স্বয়ং ভগবান। মথুরায় বাসুদেব। দ্বারকায় নারায়ন। ভাব দুই প্রকার। ভাব মহাঁভাব। ভাবের পাত্র গোপীগন ॥ মহাঁভাবের পাত্র শ্রীমতি রাধীকা। ভাব পরকিয়া। কোন পরকিয়া। উর্জ্জল পরকীয়া। কোন উর্জ্জল। রসোর্জ্জল। কোন রস প্রেমরস। কোন প্রেম। বিলাষ প্রেম। কোন বিলাস। মধুর বিলাস। কোন মধুর। জুগল মধুর। কোন জুগল। রাধাকৃষ্ণ। (আশ্রয় নির্ণয় বা ভজন নির্ণয়)

পরম বস্তু হয় জেই কোথা তার স্থিতি। কোথা হইতে আসিয়া করে শতদল পদ্মে স্থিতি। শতদল পদ্মে দেখ সেহ বেহার করে। বেহার সাঙ্গ হৈলে পুনু সেই স্থানে চলে ॥ ব্রহ্ম অক্ষয় বিজ বয়েস নিত্তী কৈসর। নাইকা হইতে স্থিতি ॥ নাএকের সঙ্গ হইলে প্রেমরস জন্মিলে। তাহাতে পরম বস্তুর উৎপতি। তার এক বিন্দু নিকসিলে কামভুবে। কামের দেস হয় কে। চেতন চিন্তিত অঙ্গিকৃত ॥ নিতাই চৈতন্য অদ্বৈ:তে তিন দেসে তিন স্থিতি। মুখে চেতন চৈতন্য বক্ষে চিন্তিত নিত্যানন্দ ॥ অঙ্গিকৃত অদ্বৈত অধেতে ॥ তিন দেশে তিন রতি। কামের স্থিতি মস্তকে। তাহাকে সর্ত্তা বলি ॥ প্রেমের স্থিতি চন্দ্রমণ্ডলে ॥ তাহাকে মহাসর্ত্তা বলি। সত্যা জিব আত্মা ॥ মহাযাত্মা পরময়াত্মা। জিব আত্মা নারায়ন ॥ পরম আত্মা ব্রজেন্দ্রনন্দন ॥ (আত্মনিরূপণ)

It would be hardly necessary to pass in review or cite passages from other Sahajiyā works like *Triguṇātmikā*,[1] *Brajapaṭala-kārikā*,[2] *Kriyāmañjarī-tattvanirūpaṇa*,[3] *Jijñāpatrī*,[4] all of which belong to the same age of prose-writing and exhibit similar characteristics. Nor is much advance noticeable in Rādhāballabh Dās's *Sahaja-tattva*, or *Rasabhakti-chandrikā* (also called *Āśraya-nirṇaya*) of Chaitanya Dās quoted by Dinesh Chandra Sen in his *Baṅga-Sāhitya-parichay*.[5] It is possible that this may have been the peculiar esoteric sectarian manner of the Sahajiyās, but all these writings may also indicate a stage in Bengali prose composition (very unlike that indicated by the *Śūnya-Purāṇ* pieces) in which an aphoristic form of theological exposition was widely prevalent. This was partly due to the exotic influence of Sanskrit Sūtra literature or Sūtra form of writing and partly perhaps an indigenous growth formed upon the manner of exposition followed in native *ṭols*. One cannot but be struck by the evenness of method and manner—the sameness of production—of these Sahajiyā works: the one work may as well have been written by the author of the other—there being hardly any distinguishing mark of style or even personal idiosyncrasy of the writer. When these passages are compared with those taken from the *Śūnya-Purāṇ*, the great differences of the two manners will emerge at once. Except the passage on Bāramāsi already quoted, which sounds like a piece of mystic incantation, there is an attempt, however crude and unintelligible to us, on the part of the *Śūnya-Purāṇ* writer to say whatever he has got to say in a connected manner: while in the passages under discussion the short disjointed state-

1 *Sāhitya Pariṣat Patrikā*, 1304, p. 415.
2 Sāhitya Pariṣat, MS. no. 355.
3 Sāhitya Pariṣat, MS. no. 338.
4 Sāhitya Pariṣat, MS. no. 937.
5 Vol. II, pp. 1655-58 and pp. 1660-61. *Sahaja-tatva* is also noticed in *Sāhitya Pariṣat Patrikā*, 1306, pp. 76-77. *Rasabhakti-chandrikā* (also called *Bhajananirṇaya*) in *Patrikā*, 13C6, p. 66.

ments, often in the form of questions and answers, with their rigid and stripped precision of language make the prose halting, clumsily hinged, and totally unsatisfactory from purely rhythmical-stylistic point of view. But then the object in the latter case was doctrinal exposition and not artistic or even plainly narrative presentment: there is no attempt at fine writing, no rhetorical tinge anywhere, nor any intrusion of sustained narrative or descriptive matter happily striking into style. This prose, with its conciseness or pointedness overdone, presents a striking contrast to the rudimentary yet elaborately rhythmed prose of *Śūnya-Purāṇ*. No sane criticism will be enthusiastic over either the capacities or the performance of this plain passionless aphoristic prose, not pedantic but severely scholastic, devoid of all ornamentation or suggestiveness and, in spite of its closeness to verse, hardly attaining any proper prose-rhythm at all.

Some improvement, however, in the direction of periodic and sustained prose will be found in some late works belonging probably to the 18th century and certainly not going beyond it. The language here is simple enough in syntax and vocabulary: there is no argumentative or expository purpose in view, no prevalence of stock-subject or stock-technicalities. Of these works, *Bṛndābana-līlā* is really a remarkable composition from our point of view. It describes with all the enthusiasm of the faithful devotee the sacred groves and temples of Bṛndāban. We begin with the general topography of the holy place:[1]

শ্রীশ্রীবৃন্দালিলা কিঞ্চিত লিক্ষতে। আদৌ শ্রীশ্রীবৃন্দাবন তাঁহার মধ্যে শ্রীশ্রীগোবিন্দজীর মন্দির তাহার উত্তরে শ্রীশ্রীগোপিনাথজীর মন্দির তাহার পশ্চিমে কিছু দুর হয় মদন মোহনজীর মন্দির শ্রীশ্রীবৃন্দাবনের পশ্চিম দিকে

1 The text here follows Sāhitya Pariṣat MS. no. 928. MS. is incomplete and undated but it does not seem to be very old and its date is probably latter part of the 18th century. Dinesh Chandra Sen in his *Baṅga-Bhāṣā O Sāhitya* (2nd Ed., p. 630) speaks of a MS of this work which is, in his vague language, about 150 years old.

কালিদহ সপ্তকেলি কদম্ব তাহার উত্তরে কালিদহর উত্তর কিনারে শূর্য্যঘাট তাহার উত্তরে জুগলঘাট তাহার পূর্ব্বে ধিরসমির তাহার পূর্ব্বে চিরঘাট বিনাম চ যেন ঘাট কেহ২ গোবিন্দঘাট কহেন তাহার পূর্ব্বে কেশীঘাট তাহার পূর্ব্বে বংশীবট তাহার পূর্ব্বে পুলিনবন তাহার পূর্ব্বে বিরক্তমণ্ডল তাহার দক্ষিনে কিছু দুর হয় জমুনাজীর পশ্চিম ধারে ভোজনঠিলা যেখানে জজ্ঞপত্নির স্থানে অন্ন মাগিয়া খাইয়াছিলেন তাহার পশ্চিমে দাবানল তাহার পশ্চিমে পুনশ্চ কালিদহের দক্ষিন কিনারা শ্রীশ্রীবৃন্দাবনে শ্রীশ্রীগোবিন্দ গোপিনাথ মদনমোহন মদনগোপাল বঙ্কবেহারী অটলবেহারি চিরবেহারি বৎসবেহারি লালবেহারি রাশবেহারি কুঞ্জবেহারী বেহারিজি রাধাবল্লভ রাধাদামোদর রাধামাধব রাধাকান্ত রাধাকৃষ্ণ রাধামোহন রাধারমন জুগলকিশোর কিশোরকিশোরি চকরচকোরি শ্যামাশ্যাম শ্যামসুন্দর কালিমর্দ্দন জসোদানন্দন কংসনিকন্দন কেশীঘাতন দেবকিনন্দন মুরলিমনোহর গোকুলচান্দ দানিয়ার চিকনাঠাকুর মাখনচোর গোপীজনবল্লব এবং অনেক২ বিগ্রহ আছেন অসংক্ষী সংক্ষা কে করিবেক প্রতি ব্রজবাসীর ঘরে ঘরে সেবা অসংক্ষ আছেন অতিত কেহ চুটকি করেন কেহ মাধুকুরি বিরক্ত ঠাকুরেরা ব্রহ্মকুণ্ডে কেশীঘাটে পুলিনবনে বংশীবটে ধিরসমিরে চিরঘাটে ও জুগলঘাটে ও কালিদহে এবং আর২ অনেক২ স্থানে২ আছেন ঞিহারদিগের বিনা আওতানে কোথাও গমনাগমন নাঞী জদ্যপীব মহোৎসব করিয়া কেহ সামিগ্রী আনিঞা নিকটে দেন তাহা দৈবে লএন নতুবা ঞিহারদিগের ভিক্ষাকরণ নাঞী ঞিহারা অজাচক হয়েন আটদষ উপবাস হয় কেবল জুমুনাজীর জল আহার তথাচ কান্তির সৌন্দর্য্য বড়ই শ্রীশ্রীবৃন্দাবনের দক্ষিনে তিন ক্রোষ মথুরা মথুরার উত্তরে জমুনাজির পশ্চিমধারে অক্রুরঘাট কংসের আদেসে নন্দীপুর হইতে কৃষ্ণবলরামকে মথুরা আনিতে জে ঘাটে কৃষ্ণ বলরামকে ডাঙ্গায় রথে রাখিয়া অক্রুর স্নান করিয়াছিলেন তাহাতে অক্রুর ঠাকুর জখন স্নান করেন তখন ডুব দেওনের কালে জলের ভিতর রথস্ত কৃষ্ণবলরামকে দেখিলেন বিস্ময় হইয়া মস্তক তুলিয়া ডাঙ্গায় দৃষ্টী করিয়া দেখেন পুর্ব্বমত ডাঙ্গায় রথ আরোহনে আছেন পুনঃ পুনঃ কয়েকবার দেখিলেন যা বুঝিলেন নিরস্ত হইলেন সে ঘাটের পশ্চীমে অক্রুরঠাকুরের একখানি গ্রাম আছেন তাহাতে এক সেবা আছেন তাহার দক্ষিনে মথুরা সহর মধ্যে বিশ্রান্ত-

ঘাট কৃষ্ণবলরাম রথ হইতে নাম্বিয়া সেই ঘাটে বশীয়াছিলেন জমুনাজীর জল পান করিয়াছিলেন পূর্ব্ব দিগে শূর্য্যঘাট সেখানে বান রাজা তপস্যা করিয়াছিলেন তাহার পুর্ব্ব ধ্রুবঘাট সেখানে ধ্রুবঠাকুর পঞ্চবৎসরের কালে তপস্যা করিয়াছিলেন আর আর চব্বিশ ঘাট আছেন মথুরার মধ্যখানে সেখানে কেশো রায়জীর মন্দির মথুরার পশ্চীমদিকে কারাগার জেখানে বসুদেব দৈবকি নিগুড়বন্ধনে ছিলেন সেস্থানে দৈবকিঠাকুরানি প্রসব হইয়াছিলেন সে স্থান অদ্যাবধি প্রকট আছেন মথুরার দক্ষিনদিগে কংস রাজার আবাষ এবং দক্ষিন দিগ পুর্ব্বমশ্চীম পর্য্যন্ত গড় আছে অতি উচ্চতর গড়ের মধ্যখানে এক সিবঠাকুর আছেন জে সিব কংসরাজা পুজা করিতেন মথুরার দক্ষিনে অর্দ্ধক্রোষ সান্তাসুকুণ্ড সেখানে ঠাকুরেরা মধুপান করিয়াছিলেন তালবনের রক্ষক ধেন্নুক নামে এক অসুর ছিল তাহাকে বধ করিয়াছেন সেখানে এখন তালগাছ নাঞী তাহার উত্তরে একক্রোষ কুমুদবন এক কুণ্ড বড় আছে তাহাতে অদ্যাবধি অনেক কুমুদ হয় তাহার পশ্চিমে এক ক্রোষ বহুলবন তাহার পশ্চীম দক্ষিন চারি ক্রোষ রাধাকুণ্ড তাহার পুর্ব্বে শ্যামকুণ্ড দুই কুণ্ডে একত্রে মিলন কিন্তু মধ্যে প্রস্থরের সাঁকো সকল আছেন মধ্যে মধ্যে মুরি সকল আছে জলের গমনাগমন সদা হইতেছেন শ্যামকুণ্ডের উত্তরে ললিতাকুণ্ড তাহা[তে]ও ঐ প্রকার সাঁকো ও মুরি আছে শ্যামকুণ্ডের দক্ষিনে তমাল বৃক্ষ ইসানে গোবিন্দজীর ঘেরা রাধাকুণ্ডের বসত বড় সহস্র সহস্র অতিত আছেন রাধাকুণ্ডের দক্ষিনে এক ক্রোষ গোবর্দ্ধন পর্ব্বত মউরাকৃতি উত্তর দক্ষিনা পর্ব্বত রাধাকুণ্ড শ্যামকুণ্ড দুই নেত্র হএন গোবর্দ্ধন পর্ব্বতের উত্তরদিকে পুর্ব্বধারে কৃষ্ণের চরণ চিহ্ন তাহার দক্ষিনে প্রায় মধ্যখানে মানশী গঙ্গা বিস্তারিত বড় মধ্যে মধ্যে বাঁকা বাঁকা আছেন জল অদ্যাপি দুগ্ধবত চতুর্দ্দিগে প্রস্থরের বান্দা চারিদিগে বসত এবং অতিতের কুঠরি মানস গঙ্গার পশ্চিমদিগে ব্রজে[র] রাজা বদন সিংহ তাহার এক বাটী বড় চিত্র বিচিত্র তাহার উত্তরদিগে সনাতন গোসাঁঞের ভজন কঠরি এবং চারি মন্দিরে চারি সিব ঠাকুর আছেন চক্রতির্থ বলিপর্ব্বতের উপর নানান বন নানান জাতিয় বৃক্ষ পত্র পল্লবাদী সদা মেঘবর্ন্ন এবং পর্ব্বত মেঘের যোতি মধ্যখানে পুরি রায়জীর মন্দির ব্রহ্মকুণ্ডের দক্ষিণ ব্রহ্মকুণ্ডে গোপাল রায়জীর মন্দির জিহোঁ গোবর্দ্ধন পর্ব্বত ধারণ করিয়াছিলেন নানান জাতিয় বিক্ষ এবং নানান পক্ষ নানান ধ্বনি করিতেছেন।

It is impossible not to be struck with the relative excellence of these passages. In the first place, we notice, here a really remarkable attempt at substained prose-writing, a great advance in the facility of handling and a positive tendency to vivacity. In the next place, the widening and varying of the range and methods of prose by its application to new subjects is a fact of great significance; and it is this application of prose to pure narration, description, or conveyance of information in a straightforward intelligible way--childish things of prose, no doubt, but its best exercising ground in infancy—that gives it an ease and fluency attained here for the first time in its history. The description, though a little monotonous, are yet not dry ; but the very pictorial-poetical nature of the subject-matter often enables the writer to strike into something like style in its proper sense. Here is another passage:

তাহার উত্তরে একপোয়া পথচারন পাহাড়ি পর্ব্বতের উপরে কৃষ্ণচন্দ্রের চরণ চিহ্ন ধেনু বৎসের এবং উঠের এবং মহিশের এবং ছেলির এবং আর আর অনেকের পদচিহ্ন আছেন জে দিবস ধেনু লইয়া শেই পর্ব্বতে গিয়াছিলেন সে দিবস মুরলির গানে জমুনা উজ্জান বহিয়াছিলেন এবং পাসান গলিয়াছিলেন সেই দিবস এই সকল পদচিহ্ন হইয়াছেন। গয়াতে গোবর্দ্ধনে এবং কাম্যবনে এবং চরণ পাহাড়িতে এই চারি স্থানে চিহ্ন এক সমতুল ইহাতে কিছু তরতম নাঞী চরণ পাহাড়ির উত্তরে দুই ক্রোয বড় বেস শাহি তাহার উত্তরে ছোট বেস শাহি তাহাতে এক লক্ষীনারায়নের এক সেবা আছেন তাহার পূর্ব্ব দক্ষিণ সেরগড় তাহার পূর্ব্ব উজ্জান এবং জমুনা তাহার দক্ষিনে অক্ষয় বট তাহার দক্ষিনে তপোবন তাহার পুর্ব্বে নন্দঘাট জে ঘাটে নন্দকে বরুন হরিয়াছিলেন। অথ॥ যমুনাজীর পার ভদ্রবন সেখানে ঠাকুরেরা ভদ্র করিয়াছিলেন তাহার দক্ষিনে ভাণ্ডিরবন সেখানে ঠাকুরেরা ভাঁটা খেলাইয়াছিলেন তাহার দক্ষিনে সূর্য্যঘাট তাহার দক্ষিনে চিরঘাট জে ঘাটে গোপিকাদিগের বস্ত্র হরন করিয়াছিলেন বস্ত্র কদম্বগাছে বান্ধীয়া রাখিয়াছিলেন সে কদম্বগাছে অদ্যাপি পূর্ব্বমত আছেন। ·········পুনশ্চ মথুরায় অনেক মহাজন আছেন আট দস হাজার গুজরাতি

ব্রাহ্মন আছেন সন্ধ্যাকালে বিশ্রান্তঘাটে জমুনাজীর আরতি হয়েন শহশ্র শহশ্র লোক জমা হয়েন দুই প্রহর রাত্রি তক নাম সঙ্কির্ত্তন হয়েন পুনশ্চ মথুরার উত্তর তিন ক্রোষ শ্রীবৃন্দাবন গোবিন্দজিউর ঘেরার পূর্ব্ব বেনুকুপ গোপিনাথজীর ঘেরার দক্ষিন পশ্চীম নিধু বন চতুর্দ্দিগে পাকা প্রাচির পুর্ব্বপশ্চীমা বন পশ্চীমদিগের দরওয়াজা কুঞ্জের ভিতর জাইতে বামদিকে এক অট্টালিকা অতি গোপনিয় স্থান বাঙ্গলাবন্দ মন্দির সুন্দর বড়ই নিধুবনের রক্ষক সহশ্র সহশ্র বানর বানরি সকল আছেন নানান বর্ন্নে বৃক্ষ পত্র পল্লবাদি অতি কোমল নানান পুষ্প শকল বিকসিত কোকীলাদী নানান পক্ষ নানান মত ধ্বনি করিতেছেন বনের শৌন্দর্য্য কে বর্ন্নন করিবেক শ্রীবৃন্দাবনের মধ্যে মহন্তের ও মহাজনের ও রাজাদিগের বহু কুঞ্জ আছেন নিধুবনের পশ্চীমে কিছু দুর হয় নিভৃত নিকুঞ্জ জে স্থানে ঠাকুরাণীজীও সখি সকল লইয়া বেসবিন্যাষ করিতেন ঠাকুরাণীজীওর পদচিহ্ন আছেন নিত্য পূজা হয়েন নিভৃত নিকুঞ্জের পূর্ব্বে শ্রীশ্রীঅদৈত মহাপ্রভুর কুঞ্জ তাহার ইসানে মহাপ্রভুর মন্দীর উত্তরে আমলি গাছ ও এবং যমুনাজীর গোবিন্দজীর ঘেরার পশ্চীমে মহারাসস্থল তাহার মধ্যে কিত্তিচন্দ্র রায়ের কুঞ্জ বড় অনেক অতিত্ত আছেন তাহার দক্ষিনে বারানশী সেটের কুঞ্জ অতি রম্য স্থান শ্রীবৃন্দাবনের উত্তরে এক বাউকোনে জমুনাজী শ্রীবৃন্দাবনে জে জেখানে বানর বানরি আছেন সকল রাজারা রোজবন্দি ভক্ষসামিগ্রী বন্দান করিয়া দিয়াছেন।

There are, of course, still many drawbacks and disadvantages of vocabulary and syntax. We have occasional intrusion of definite and not merely accidental alliteration, inherited from the traditions of verse-forms and some of the lines are no doubt capable of exact stave-division; but one does not really want faultless precocity at the outset. After all is said, it must be admitted that here there is no longer any falling back upon the tricks of verse and other uncongenial things and that the rhythm attained is not really poetic rhythm but it is something approaching, in however groping fashion, to the creation of definite prose-rhythm with its balance of phrase, its variation of long and short sentences, and its

natural adjustment of clauses with due regard to general harmonic effect.

There are specimens of another work, supposed to date from the 18th century, called *Bṛndābana-Parikramā*, of which passages are quoted by Dineschandra Sen in *Baṅga-Sāhitya-parichaya* (vol. ii, p. 1674) from a MSS dated B.S. 1218. This composition, like the *Bṛndābana-līlā*, also purports to be a description of the holy place—a fact which seems to indicate that works of this nature were more numerous than usually supposed. The same characteristic descriptive style is also illustrated here, and it is needless to quote a longer passage than the following:

তাহার অগ্নিকোণে রাসস্থল কিশোরীবট সেই স্থানে গুপ্তস্থল জাবট গ্রামের পশ্চিম কোকিলবন কোকিলের কুলি হইতেছে শ্রীমতী শুনিয়াছিলেন সেই স্থানে এক কুণ্ড তাহাতে কেলিকদম্বের গাছ বেষ্টিত আছে তাহা হইতে দুই ক্রোশ চরণপাহাড়ী তাহার উপর শ্রীবলরামজীএর চরণচিহ্ন ১ হাত প্রস্থ অষ্ট অঙ্গুলি শ্রীকৃষ্ণের চরণ-চিহ্ন তিন পোয়া প্রস্থ সাত অঙ্গুলি ঐ পাহাড়েতে গোধনের পাঁজ আর মোষের পাঁজ আর উটের পাঁজ সেই পাহাড়েতে দুইভাই মুরলীধ্বনি করিয়াছিলেন পাহাড়ে হাঁটুগাড়া চিহ্ন আছে তাহার পশ্চিম সাত ঘর‍্যা খেলার চিহ্ন আছে তাহার পশ্চিম চরণগঙ্গা তাহার দক্ষিণ অৰ্দ্ধ ক্রোশ বড় বেটনগ্রাম তাহাতে সেবা শ্রীমুরলীধর ঠাকুর জীউ।

From the dry pseudo-metaphysical exposition of the Sahajiyā works to this 18th century descriptive prose is indeed a long step; but this extraordinary development, apparently puzzling, will be intelligible when we take into account the fact that early Bengali poetical literature by this time had attained a high degree of relative perfection and was by this process preparing the way for the creation of a literary language in general. The resources of the language and its literary capacities were now brought within easy reach of any prose-writer—although such writers were not plentiful—who would have had chosen to utilise them. The wonderfully

rapid and accomplished literary development of prose in the 19th century caught up, summed and uttered in more perfect form this literary heritage of past ages, but even in a period of scanty prose-production such as the 18th century, in which verse-treatment of every subject was still predominant, we cannot mistake the influence of the literary perfection of the language in general on whatever little prose it produced.

It may be necessary in this connexion to indicate the influence of Sanskrit learning on early Bengali prose-writing. It is pretty certain that the specimens of such prose as we possess, whether of the metaphysical or the descriptive sort, represent periods when Sanskrit culture of some kind, was already open to and in some degree had been enjoyed by the writers. Not only occasional Sanskrit forms and technicalities are perceived and some Sanskrit works on Law and Logic were directly translated, but the general tendency, inspite of occasional easy note of works like *Bṛndābana-līlā*, was towards sanscritised, if not ornate, diction. No effective Sanskrit influence, with its predilection for longdrawn-out compound words, complex sentence-framing and other things, may be definitely traced anywhere. This prose-manner, however, cannot be called sanscritic in the sense in which it is used to designate the pedantic affectation of some of the Fort William College Paṇḍits or of the Sanskrit College style of the fifties ; and it is remarkable that with hardly any model before them, these writers never chose to imitate the later sesquipedalian Sanskrit ,prose style of *Kādambarī* or *Harṣa-charīta.* Much has been written, however, on the Sanskrit influence which is supposed to have come through the Kathakas or professional story-tellers, whose manner and method of exposition is said to have considerably moulded the narrative or descriptive literature of the type in question. But it must be admitted that though sometimes their "set passages" evince a highly artistic or poetic style, their bombastically ornate diction and artificial arrangement, their

predilection for sanscritic forms and long-balanced sentences, their highly cadenced rhetorical eloquence label their prose-passages at once as essentially one of the ornate kind showing little colour of resemblance to the type of prose we are discussing.

In the absence of any material to go upon, it is impossible to indicate how far the experiment in descriptive prose of the literary kind, such as we find in the *Bṛndāban-līlā* or *Bṛndāban-parikramā*, was followed upon in any other prose-writing of the period ; but the existence and popularity of such contemporary descriptive poems as *Kāśī-parikramā* of Jayanarāyaṇ would seem to indicate, inspite of occasional and timid trespass, the still exclusive monopoly of verse in the domain of such literature. The excursion of prose, however, beyond the narrow limits of metaphysical matter was an attempt the lesson of which was perhaps not wholly lost. From the few prose pieces of that century which have come down to us, we find application of prose in treatises on law, logic and medicine, subjects hitherto attempted, as all subjects were, in verse. Although only a few such works have been discovered, it is quite plausible that such attempts were not sporadic or isolated but were more numerous and deliberate than the scanty remains would justify us to infer. One limitation still remains, namely, that of translation (for most of these works are translations or adaptations from Sanskrit originals) ; but translation in the school-time of Bengali prose is not a drawback or disadvantage but a distinct means of attaining diversity, adequacy and accomplishment. Here is a very simple passage from a manuscript (about 200 years old) on medicine called কবিরাজী পাতড়া (*Kabirājī Pātḍā*) which gives a recipe for dyspepsia :[1]

বাই অম্বলের প্রতিকার। শুপারী খণ্ড। শুপারি কাটিয়া জলেতে সিদ্ধ করিব। তবে দুগ্ধে সিজাইব। শুষ্ক করিয়া গুঁড়া করিব। তবে

1 The text given here, a little modernised perhaps in spelling, follows the quotation in *Sāhitya Pariṣat Patrikā*, 1306, no. 1, p. 51.

মকাল তোলাইব। ধন্যা ত্রিকটু গুড়ুচ্চ জ্যৈষ্ঠমধু তেজপত্র এলাইচ নাগেশ্বর তালিশপত্র রক্তচন্দন পদ্মকাষ্ঠ দেবদারু কালজিরা মহুরী লবঙ্গ। ......শুঁঠিখণ্ড। শুঁঠি ৪ তোলা নবাত ১৬ সের দুগ্ধ ১৯৬। শুঁঠি চূর্ণ করিব। এ তিনপাদ আটিব। তবে বকাল দিব। ধন্যা জিরা মুথা পিপুল বংশলোচন গুড়ুচ্চ এলাইচ তেজপত্র কালজিরা হরিতকী মরীচ নাগেশ্বর এষাং প্রতি ২ তোলা এ সব চূর্ণ করিয়া দুগ্ধে সিজাইব। তবে সিদ্ধ হইলে মউ দিব। তবে সিদ্ধ হয়। ইহার শূল ঘুচে। আম্বল পীত্তি ঘুচে। বুক বেথা ঘুচে। আম্বল হইতে যে২ বলবান হয় তাহা ঘুচে। ইহার নাম শুঁটিখণ্ড।

The following passage is from a work on the Philosophy of Grammar called *Bhāṣā-parichchheda* (ভাষা-পরিচ্ছেদ) (MS dated B.S. 1181) apparently a translation of the Sanskrit original of the same name. The beginning runs thus:

গোতম মুনিকে শিষ্য সকলে জিজ্ঞাসা করিলেন, আমারদিগের মুক্তি কি প্রকারে হয় তাহা কৃপা করিয়া বলহ। তাহাতে গোতম উত্তর করিতেছেন তাবৎ পদার্থ জানিলেই মুক্তি হয়। তাহাতে শিষ্যেরা সকলে জিজ্ঞাসা করিলেন পদার্থ কতো। তাহাতে গোতম কহিতেছেন। পদার্থ সপ্ত প্রকার। দ্রব্য গুণ কর্ম্ম সামান্য বিশেষ সমবায় অভাব। তাহার মধ্যে দ্রব্য নয় প্রকার।

Again:

মীমাংসা মতে কর্ত্তাত্মক শব্দ নিজে ধ্বন্যাত্মক শব্দ জন্য বর্ণাত্মক শব্দকে ঈশ্বর কহেন মীমাংসকেরা পরমাত্মা মানেন না। অতঃপর কর্ম্মের পরিচয় কহিতেছি। ....ব্যাপারবৎ কারণের নাম করণ। কারণ জন্য হইয়া কার্য্যজনক যে হয় তাহার নাম ব্যাপার।......অনুমিতির অপর কারণ পক্ষতা আছে। ইহাতে প্রাচীন পণ্ডিতেরা কহেন পর্ব্বতে বহ্নি সন্দেহের নাম পক্ষতা। এ কথা ভালো নহে কারণ যে হয় সে অবশ্য কার্য্যের অব্যবহিত পূর্ব্ব ক্ষণেতে থাকে। প্রথম ক্ষণে সাধ্য সংশয় পরে ব্যাপ্তির স্মৃতি পরে পরামর্শ। তবে পরামর্শ কালে সংশয় নষ্ট হইলে অনুমিতির

পূর্ব্বক্ষণ পরামর্শ ক্ষণ হয় সে ক্ষণে সংশয় থাকিল না। জ্ঞান ইচ্ছা দ্বেষকৃত সুখদুঃখ। ইহারা দ্বিক্ষণ স্থায়ী পদার্থ ত্রিক্ষণে নষ্ট হয় জানিবে।[1]

From a work on law and ritual called *Byabasthā-tattva*[2]:

অথ অপালন নিমিত্তক গোবধ প্রায়শ্চিত্ত ব্যবস্থা। সর্ব্বথা প্রকারে প্রতিপালন না করে ইহাতে শীত অনিল উদ্বন্ধন শূন্যাগার জলমধ্য অগ্নিদাহ পতন গর্ত্তে ব্যাঘ্র ইত্যাদি নিমিত্তক যদি গোবধ হয় তবে অর্দ্ধ গোচর্ম্ম গাত্রে দিঞা গোসহিত প্রত্যহ যাতায়াৎরূপ ইতি কর্ত্তব্যতা করিঞা প্রজাপত্যব্রত প্রায়শ্চিত্ত হয়। যদি ইতিকর্ত্তব্যতা না কোরিতে পারে তবে ইতিকর্ত্তব্যতার অনুকল্প এক প্রাজাপত্য হয়। অতএব প্রাজাপত্য দুই প্রায়শ্চিত্ত হয়। তদ অনুকল্প ষট্ কার্ষাপন বরাটিকা দিবেক। ইহাতে এক সামান্য গোদক্ষিণা হয় তদনুকল্প বৃষমূল্য পঞ্চ কার্ষ্যা সামান্য গোমূল্য এক কার্ষাপণ এবং ষট্ কার্ষাপণ বরাটিকা দক্ষিণা হয়। ইহাতে বিশেষ বচনপ্রাপ্ত শূদ্রের প্রাজাপত্য দুই প্রায়শ্চিত্ত হয়।

The stiffness of the subject and style of the original is, no doubt, partially responsible for the want of ease or fluency in the translation:, but the very fact that the translator had to keep himself close to his original gave him a more correct syntax and a precision and condensation of language, eminently suited for such exposition but differing greatly from the sententious manner of the previous age.

Even the theological literature assumed a more orderly style. This will be illustrated by the following short

1 This passage is taken from a notice of the manuscript in question in *Sāhitya Pariṣat Patrikā*, 1304, p. 325: the text is obviously punctuated and modernised in spelling. More specimens of this prose would have been welcome, but unfortunately only these two passages are given. We have not been able to get access to the manuscript itself.

2 This curious manuscript is noticed in *S. P. Patrikā*, 1308, p. 43 from which the above quotation is taken. It is written in Sanskrit but part of it is in Bengali prose. The date of the manuscript is 1235 B.S.

passage from *Jñānādi-sādhanā*, quoted in *Baṅga-Sāhitya-parichaya*:[1]

পরে অজ্ঞানী নিত্য জনে হৈয়া সেই সাধুকে শ্রীগুরু জ্ঞান করিয়া জিজ্ঞাসা করেন আমাকে কৃপা করিয়া আত্মজ্ঞান জন্মাইয়া পরে নিত্য শ্রীনবদ্বীপের শ্রীকৃষ্ণ চৈতন্যকে পৃথক দেখাইয়া নিত্য শ্রীবৃন্দাবনের পরমেশ্বর শ্রীকৃষ্ণাদিকে দেখাইয়া কৃতার্থ করিলেন। পরে সেই সাধু কৃপা করিয়া সেই অজ্ঞান জনকে চৈতন্য করিয়া তাহার শরীরের মধ্যে জীবাত্মাকে প্রত্যক্ষ দেখাইয়া পরে তাহার বাম কর্ণেতে শ্রীচৈতন্য মন্ত্র কহিয়া পরে সেই চৈতন্য মন্ত্রের অর্থ জানাইয়া পরে সেই জীব দ্বারা একাদশ ইন্দ্রিয়াদিযুক্ত নিত্য শরীর দেখাইয়া পরে সাধক অভিমানে শ্রীকৃষ্ণাদির রূপ আরোপ চিন্তাতে দেখাইয়া পরে সিদ্ধি অভিমান শ্রীকৃষ্ণাদির মুক্তি পৃথক দেখাইয়া প্রেমলক্ষণার সমাধি ভক্তিতে সংস্থাপন করিলেন। পরে সেই অজ্ঞানী জন এইপ্রকার সেই গুরু হইতে আপনার আত্মাকে পৃথক দেখিয়া পরে নিত্য শ্রীনবদ্বীপের শ্রীকৃষ্ণচৈতন্য মহাপ্রভুকে পৃথক দেখিয়া পরে সাধক দেখিয়া অভিমানে শ্রীরাধাকৃষ্ণাদি পৃথক প্রেমলক্ষণা রসময়ী ভক্তি করিয়া নিত্য রসে বিরাজ করিলে পুনর্ব্বার সেই গুরুস্থানে কহেন আপনে আমার জ্ঞানদাতা শ্রীগুরু আপনি আমার জ্ঞান জন্মাইয়াছেন কি না তাহা বুঝিবার কারণ আমাকে জিজ্ঞাসা করিয়াছেন তাহাতে আপনি আমাকে যে প্রকার জ্ঞান জন্মাইয়াছেন তাহাতে আমি যে প্রকার বুঝিয়াছি তেমত কহিলাম। পরে সেই জ্ঞানদাতা শ্রীগুরু শিষ্যকে আলিঙ্গন করিয়া আশীর্ব্বাদ কহিলেন তুমার সুজ্ঞানআদি জন্মিয়াছে তুমি শ্রীবৃন্দাবনে প্রেমলক্ষণা রসময়ী ভক্তিতে বিরাজ কর ॥ ইতি ॥

All this is indeed a great advance towards periodic or balanced prose. The syntax is not irregular: the verb is not dropped or shifted at will: the clauses are not clumsily thrown together or inverted with complete disregard of general harmony: in short, the whole trend is a movement

1 Vol. II, pp. 1630-37. This MS, dated 1158 B.S., is also noticed in *S. P. Patrikā*, 1304, p. 341, where it is called *Sādhana-kathā*. The text as given in these places are obviously punctuated and corrected in spelling.

towards maturity and not decline and, if it is not too sweeping to generalise, towards modernity itself.

It would not be strictly proper to take into account, as specimens of literary style, the prose of a few deeds and documents which have come down from the 17th and 18th centuries; but this "documentary" prose, though seldom rising into art, indicate that by application of prose to a large variety of subjects, the right direction was being taken towards systematic prose-writing, towards the creation of a prose-of-all-work. In those days of Persian ascendancy, the application of Bengali to these documents is a fact significant in itself ; and these specimens show vernacular letter-writing, one of the most powerful instruments in the formation of a general prose style, in full operation. Before the Third Literary Conference in North Bengal (1316 B.S.), the President in his address quoted specimens of two Bengali letters written by Assamese kings, one of which dates back to 1477 and the other to 1553 Śaka.[1] We quote here the first named letter, dated 1477, written by Rājā Naranārāyaṇ to the Ahome king Chukāmfā Svargadeva:

স্বস্তি সকল দিগ্‌দন্তিকর্ণাস্ফালসমীরণপ্রচলিতহিমকরহারহাসকাশকৈলাস-পাণ্ডরযশোরাশিবিরাজিতত্রিপিষ্টপত্রিদশতরঙ্গিণীনির্ম্মলপবিত্রকলেবর ধীষণধীর ধৈর্য্যমর্য্যাদাপারাবার সকলদিক্‌কামিনীগীয়মানগুণসন্তান শ্রীশ্রীস্বর্গনারায়ণ মহারাজ প্রচণ্ডপ্রতাপেষু।

লেখনং কার্য্যঞ্চ। এথা আমার কুশল। তোমার কুশল নিরন্তরে বাঞ্ছা করি। অখন তোমার আমার সন্তোষসম্পাদক পত্রাপত্রি গতায়াত হইলে উভয়ানুকূল প্রীতির বীজ অঙ্কুরিত হইতে রহে। তোমায় আমার কর্ত্তব্যে সে বর্দ্ধতাক পাই পুষ্পিত ফলিত হইবেক। আমরা সেই উদ্যোগত

1 Reports of the Conference (*Uttara Baṅga Sāhitya Sammelana, Tritīya Adhibeṣaṇa, Kārya-bibaraṇī*), pp. 35-37. These were first published in *Āsambanti*, June 37, 1901 and August 1, 1901 The first of these letters has been (without any indication of its source) reprinted in *Baṅga-Sāhitya-parichaya*, vol. ii, p. 1672.

আছি। তোমারো এগোট কর্ত্তব্য উচিত হয়। না কর তাক আপনে জান। অধিক কি লেখিম। সত্যানন্দ কর্ম্মী রামেশ্বর শর্ম্মা কালকেতু ও ধুমা সর্দ্দার উদ্ভণ্ড চাউনিয়া শ্যামরাই ইমরাক পাঠাইতেছি তামরার মুখে সকল সমাচার বুঝিয়া চিতাপ বিদায় দিবা।

Here is an extract from the second letter dated 1553 Śaka written by the Assamese king to the Muhammedan Faujdār Nawāb Aleyār Khān of Gauhati:

স্বস্তি বিবিধ গুণগাম্ভীর্য্যপরমোদার শ্রীযুক্ত নবাব আলেয়ার খাঁ সদাশয়েষু।

সস্নেহ লিখনং কার্য্যঞ্চ। আগে এথা কুশল। তোমার কুশল সততে চাহি। পরং সমাচারপত্র এহি। এখন তোমার উকিল পত্রসহ আসিয়া আমার স্থান পহুঁছিল। আমিও প্রীতিপ্রণয়পূর্ব্বক জ্ঞাত হইলাম। আর তুমি যে লিখিয়াছ তোমার উত্তম পত্র আসিতে আমার কিঞ্চিৎ মনস্থিতা না রহে এযে তোমার ভালই দৌলত। অতএব আমিও পরম আহ্লাদরূপে জানিতে আছো তোমার আমার অদ্বয়ভাব প্রীতি ঘটিলে মনমাফিক সন্তোষ কি কারণ না হইবেক। আর তোমার আমার অত্যন্তরূপে আনন্দযুক্ত হইলে উভয় পক্ষ লোকের নাবিদ্বেশরূপ অবিযুতা অন্তশেত কিসক না রহিবেক। এ কারণ তুমি লেখিবাক পোরা।

From the letter of Nandakumār to his son Gurudās published in the *Sāhitya Pariṣat Patrikā* (B.S. 1310, pp. 62-65)[1]:

তোমার মঙ্গল সর্ব্বদা বাসনা করনক অত্র কুশল পরন্তঃ ২৫ তারিখের পত্র ২৭ রোজ রাত্রে পাইয়া সমাচার জানিলাম শ্রীযুত ফেতরত আলিখাঁ এর এখানে আইশনের সম্বাদ জে লিখিয়াছিলে এতক্ষণতক পঁহুচেন নাই পঁহুচিলেই জানা জাইবেক শ্রীযুত রায় জগৎচন্দ্র বিষ রোজের পর বাটি

1 For the history and text of these documents, see *S. P. Patrikā*, 1306, pp. 297-301 and *ibid*, 1308. The text, however, is taken from a very modern copy of the original. They are reprinted in *Baṅga-Sāhitya-parichaya*, vol. ii, pp. 1638-43.

হইতে আসিয়াছেন যেমত২ কুচেষ্টা পাইতেছেন তাহা জানাই গেল তিনি যথা২ জাউন ফলত কার্য্যের দ্বারাতেই বুঝিবেন পষ্ট হইয়া আপনারি মন্দ করিতেছেন সে সকল লোকেও অবশ্য বুঝিবেক তুমি শ্রীযুত মেস্তর মেদলটিন সাহেবের নিকট যাতায়াত করিবে একখত তাঁহাকে লিখিলাম দিয়া নিরালা সকল কহিবে ও স্থনিবে তখন জেরূপ কথোপকথন হয় তাহার মত করিবে তিঁহ চিত্তে জানেন জে আমার কথাক্রমেই ইনি কার্য্য করিতেছেন স্থন্দররূপ তাঁহার সহিত মিলিবে কোনও বিশএ উদ্বিগ্ন নহিবে ।[1]

This is not absolutely despicable writing, even though in the last extract there is an inevitable mixture of Persian, due partly perhaps to the fact that it was addressed to a Muhammedan Nawāb. The same tendency is illustrated by the documents, dated B.S. 1125 and 1137, relating to the Baiṣṇab triumph of Rādhā Mohan Dās Ṭhākur, published and edited by Ramendra Sundar Tribedi in the *Patrikā*: from which it is needless to quote more than the following short illustrative extract. It speaks of the পরকীয় doctrine[2]:

পরে আমরা কহিলাম গৌড়দেশে শ্রীশ্রী৺ প্রভুর পাদাঙ্কিত স্থান সেখানে শ্রীশ্রী৺ ভাগবত শাস্ত্রী আছেন এবং সভাসৎ স্থান আছেন তাহারা মহোপাধ্যায় বিচার হইবেক গৌড়ে পরকীয় ধর্ম্মের অধিকারী তাহারা স্বকীয় ধর্ম্ম লবে কেন এখানে যেমৎ সভাসদ্ হইল গৌড়দেশে অনেক সভাসদ্ আছে বিচার করিবেক অতএব এখানকার সভাসদ্ এক পণ্ডিত ও এক মনস্বোপদার যায় তবে বিচার করিয়া স্বকীয় ধর্ম্ম সংস্থাপন করিয়া আইসে তাহাতে সর্ব্ব-সম্মত মতে শ্রীযুত মহারাজা সভাসদ্ শ্রীযুত কৃষ্ণদেব ভট্টাচার্য্য জিঁহো স্বকীয়

1 Some letters of Nandakumār dated 1756 are published by Beveridge in the *National Magazine* (September 1872). The letter from which quotation is given is dated 1772.

2 In this connexion it is necessary to mention the documents relating to the affairs of Lālā Udayanārāyaṇ Rāy, published in the *Patrikā*, 1308, pp. 243-54. Inspite of a slight admixture of Persian, here we have good specimens of descriptive prose. The passages, however, are too lengthy for full quotation here.

পরকীয় বিভিন্ন করিলেন তিঁহো দিগ্বিজয় মহারাজার সভা হইতে তাহাকে আনিয়া এবং এক মনস্বোবদার সহিত প্রয়াগ ও কাশী হইয়া আইলাম তারাও স্বকীয়ায় দস্তখত করিয়া দিলেন পরে গৌড়দেশে আসিয়া গোস্বামীগণ ও মহান্তসন্তান মহান্তশাখাগণ যে যে স্থানে আছেন সর্ব্বত্র অনেক বিচার হইল সকলে বিচারে দিগ্বিজয়ী স্থানে অজয়পত্র দিলেন পরে শ্রীপাটখণ্ডে আইলাম তাঁহাদের সহিত অনেক কথোপকথন হইল তাহারা কহিলেন আমরা শ্রীশ্রী৵ মহাপ্রভু মতাবলম্বী তাঁহার মতাধিকারী শ্রীশ্রী৵ ছয় গোস্বামী তাঁহারা যে মত অবলম্ব গ্রহণ করিয়াছেন সেই মত আমরা যাজন করি সেই সব মতের সার গোস্বামীরা বেদ-প্রাণিত এবং ওম্-প্রাণিত এবং রস-প্রাণিত যে সকল ভাগবত শাস্ত্র করিয়াছেন তাহা ব্যতিরেক করিয়া আমরা স্বকীয়ায় কিমত দস্তখত করিব অতএব শ্রীযুত গোস্বামীর গাদির গ্রন্থশাস্ত্রে অধিকারী শ্রীশ্রী৵ চিনিবাস আচার্য্য ঠাকুর তাহার সন্তান সকল আছেন তাহাদের স্থানে আগে দস্তখত করাহ তবে আমরাহ দস্তখত করিয়া দিব এ কথায় আমরা শ্রীপাট যাজিগ্রাম যাইয়া দখল করিতে কহিলেন আমরা স্বকীয়ার দস্তখত বিনা বিচারে পারিব না আমরা শ্রীচৈতন্য মহাপ্রভুর মতাবলম্বী অতএব বিচারে যে ধর্ম্ম স্থায়ী হয় তাহাই লইবে এই মত করার হইল বিচার মানিলাম তাহাতে পাতসাই শুভা শ্রীযুত নবাব জাফর খাঁ সাহেব নিকট দরখাস্ত হইল তিঁহো কহিলেন ধর্ম্মাধর্ম্ম বিনা তজবিজ হয় না অতএব বিচার কবুল করিলেন সেই মত সভাসদ হইল।

These 17th and 18th century documents and other prose pieces show that even in the hands or mouths of people, who cannot be strictly called literary, the vernacular in that stage of prose-writing had got out of mere rusticity or childish babbling. The stage of apprenticeship was indeed not over, but it is good straight-forward Bengali attaining sufficient rhythmical and verbal dignity and showing the way to better things if it had suited the writers to write more originally in prose. Treatises on law, medicine and similar documents or esoteric theological writing can seldom, in the very nature of the case, lay claim to literary competency or to the motive

power of style; but the description of Bṛndāban and such other subjects gives better opportunities and, rude though the resources of form and model were, they were yet used with sufficient skill. This, though qualified, is high praise indeed. Full and mature prose style is yet to come; indeed style in the strict and rare sense had scarcely been attained or consciously attempted. The necessary stock of material was yet to be accumulated, the necessary plan and method of working to be slowly and painfully elaborated. There was still clumsiness and uncouth handling inseparable from earliness and immaturity. These Sahajiyā and other works again written, as they were, for an exclusive and esoteric sect and in a difficult language were not very widely known or easily accessible to all. In fact, their general influence was not much, and this may be one reason why their very laudable attempt at vernacular prose-writing was not so widely taken up or readily emulated as it should have been. But the return to vernacular writing from Sanskrit or Persian; the general change of ground from verse to prose; the widening of subjects and methods; the practising of a perfectly homely and vernacular style, free from obscurity or ornate Sanskrit construction; and lastly, the example of easy plain business-like narration, not altogether devoid of character, all this meant a very great deal. The result achieved may not have been literature in the proper sense, but the small amount of positive achievement should not blind us to its immense formal importance or to the fact that all this indicated a movement towards better and better prose-writing and the gradual evolution of an indigenous prose style. But in the years which followed, during days of political and social instability and general decay of culture consequent upon revolutionary changes of government, the development of Bengali prose met with a great check; and it was not until nearly a century had elapsed, with the establishment of peace and prosperity, business and leisure, congenial to its cultivation, that we have again the serene exercise of

elaborate prose. But for this arrested development and its rejuvenation under entirely different condition, Bengali prose would have developed along the lines indicated, entirely self-made and home-grown[1].

1 Since writing the above essay on Old Bengali Prose, we have seen the text of *Golok Saṁhitā* of Bṛndāban Dās as published in the *Patrikā* 1309, pp. 55-59. It purports to be a brief treatise on cosmology. The MS is undated but it has been supposed to be not older than the latter part of the 18th century. The beginning is in prose while the latter part is in verse. Here is an illustrative extract:

সর্ব্বাদৌ মহাশূন্য। তদুপরি অন্ধকার। তদুপরি ধুন্ধুকার। তদুপরি স্থির পবন। তদুপরি কুর্ম্মরাজ। তদুপরি ঐরাবত। অনন্তের সহস্র ফণা। আর মহাফণা। তার পরে সপ্ত পাতাল। কি কী। অতল ১ বিতল ২ সুতল ৩ তলাতল ৪ রসাতল ৫ মহাতল ৬ পাতাল ৭ এই সপ্তপাতাল। তদুপরি পৃথিবি। পৃথিবি বেষ্টিত সপ্ত সাগর॥ কি কী। লবণ ১ ইক্ষু ২ সুরা ৩ সর্পিস্ ৪ দধি ৫ দুগ্ধ ৬ জলাস্তকা ৭। সপ্তদ্বিপ বেষ্টিত সপ্ত সাগর। সপ্ত দ্বিপের নাম কি। জম্বুদ্বিপ পক্ষদ্বিপ কুসদ্বিপ কাঞ্চনদ্বিপ সাকরদ্বিপ পুস্করদ্বিপ অনন্তদ্বিপ ৭।

APPENDIX II

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THE BENGALI BIBLE

With respect to the name given to the Serampore Bible, we have the following entry in Fountain's Diary on the 4th January, 1798 (quoted in *Contributions towards a History of Biblical Translations in India*, Calcutta 1854): "This morning the Pundit attended upon us. It was observed that the word *Mangalakhyan* would not properly denominate the whole Bible, as it only signified 'good news', a term more applicable to the Gospel. It was then proposed to call the Bible *Dharma Shastra*: but the Pundit said *Shastra* only meant that writing which contained commands or orders. We must therefore call it *Dharma pustaka*. viz., the Holy Book." On the 18th March 1800,[1] the first sheet of Matthew was printed. On the 7th February 1801, the first edition of the Bengali New Testament was published. It consisted of 2,000 copies; the expense was £62. In 1800 the translation of the Old Testament was finished. The books of the Old Testament, as printed by the Serampore Press (1801-09) are in 4 volumes, viz. (1) Pentateuch, 1801; (2) Joshua-Esther, 1809; (3) Job-Song of Solomon, 1804; (4) Isaiah-Malachi, 1805. According to the Serampore *Memoirs*, however, the dates of publication are: (1) 1802; (2) 1809; (3) 1803; (4) 1807. The *Memoirs*, however, are not always reliable in this respect. The Psalter appears to have been issued separately in 1803. In 1803 the second edition of the Bengali New Testament was commenced, and in 1806 it was ready, 1500 copies. The proof-sheets were examined

1 The date is incorrectly given as 1803 by Dinesh Ch. Sen (*Hist. of Beng. Lang. and Lit.* 1911, p. 852). See *Tenth Memoir*, Appendix.

by every one of the missionaries; and, in addition to this, Carey and Marshman went through it, verse by verse, one reading the Greek, the other the Bengali text. In 1809 the Old Testament was published, and in the same year the whole Bible appeared in five large volumes. It was the work of Carey's own hand (manuscripts may be seen still in the possession of the Serampore Baptist Missionaries); for, Ward, writing some years subsequently, mentions that Carey "wrote with his own pen the whole of the five volumes." In 1809 a third edition of the New Testament went to the Press, consisting of 100 copies and came out in 1811. It was a folio edition. The fourth edition of the New Testament was commenced in 1813 and published in 1817 (5,000 copies) [the date is wrongly given as 1816 in the *Tenth Memoir*]; the sixth edition of the New Testament and third edition of the Old in 1820; 8th edition of the whole Bible in 1832: the text of this revised edition in double columns is divided into two parts: 1. Genesis—Esther, pp. 204: 2. Job—Malachi and the New Testament pp. 623. The New Testament has a separate title-page, with date 1832 in Bengali, and 1833 in English figures. Other important subsequent translations of the Bible are:

(1) The Old Testament translated from the original Hebrew by Dr. W. Yates and the Calcutta Baptist Missionaries with native assistants, pp. 843, Calcutta 1844. The New Testament translated by W. Yates, Calcutta 1833, and also an edition printed for the British and Foreign Bible Society in 2 vols. in Roman characters, London 1839. The whole Bible translated from the original tongues by W. Yates and other Calcutta Baptist Missionaries with native assistants, pp. 1144, Calcutta 1845.

(2) The above revised by J. Wenger, pp. 1139, Calcutta 1861. A reprint in smaller size appeared in 1867, edited with slight alterations by C. B. Lewis.

(3) The Holy Bible, in Bengali, with references, trans-

lated by the Baptist Missionaries with Bengali assistants. Revised edition by G. H. Rouse. pp. 815, 257. Calcutta 1897.

(4) The New Testament translated by J. F. Ellerton pp. 993, Calcutta 1819.

The different books of the Bible published separately are not mentioned here, the earliest being Matthew (1800), to which were 'annexed some of the most remarkable prophecies in the Old Testament respecting Christ'. The next in chronological order of publication was Pentateuch (1801).

APPENDIX III

(*Page 169 footnote*)

SHOSTHO KOTHA KHENKSHIYALEE AR DANRKAKER

Ek Khenkshiyalee dekhilek ek danrkak bhalo ek tookra poneerer apan mookhe loiya ek gachher daler oopor boshya rohyachhe, tutkhyonat khenkshyalee bibechona korite lagilo je emon shoo 'shwadoo grash kemon koriya hat korite paribo. Kohilek, he priye kak aji shokale tomake dekhiya ami boro shontooshto hoiyachhi ; tomar shoondur monrti ar oojjol palok amar chokyer jyoti, jodi nomrota krome toomi onoogroho koriya amake ektee gan shoonaite, tobe nishshondeho janitam je tomar shwor tomar ar ar gooner shoman bote. Anondonmotto kak ei onoonoyo kothate bhooliya tahake apan shoorer poripatee dekhaibar jonye mookh khoolilek tokhon poneer neeche porilo, taha tokhoni khenkshiyalee oothaiya loiya joyo jookta proshthan korilek, ar danrkakke obshoro krome apon mitthya gorimar khed korite rakhiya gelo.

Ihar phol ei, jekhane aropit kotha probesh kore shekhane gnyan gochar lop pae.

The system of transliteration adopted by Gilchrist for Bengali was substantially the same as that devised by him for Hindoostani, Persian, Arabic and Sanskrit. It was on a phonetic basis, and it attempted to render by means of English spelling the *sounds* of Bengali, without any reference to the established orthography of the language, even in the case of Sanskrit words. The Roman vowels had their English values. The rival system of Sir William Jones very properly adopted the Italian or Latin values of the Roman vowels ; and this system modified by Wilson and Hunter finally won the day. Gilchrist uses *o* for অ, the Sanskrit and Hindustani sound

of অ being regularly represented by *u*; ই is denoted by *i*. and ঈ by *ee* ; উ and ঊ are represented by *oo* ; and *sh* is used for শ, ষ, স, *s* being used wherever these letters are so pronounced. The cerebrals are in italics, *t d r*; the *h* of the aspirate is separated from the stop letter by a bar, as in Sir William Jones's system (*k*,). Gilchrist uses k for ক, not c, as is done by Jones, so that with the former খ is *kh*, not *ch*. For অ again he never employs *e* or *a*. His system, whatever may be its faults, has at least the merit of consistency.—For want of suitable types in the Press we have not been able to reproduce here the letters with a bar.

APPENDIX IV

(Page 214 footnote 2)

EARLY CHRISTIAN PERIODICALS (BENGALI)

The *Samāchār Darpaṇ* and the *Digdarśan* were not, properly speaking, missionary papers: for religious controversy was generally avoided. The first Christian periodical was the *Gospel Magazine* (8vo. pp. 1-16), English and Bengali, commenced in December 1819 by Baptist Missionary Society; it continued till 1823. Then came the *Evangelist*, edited by Rev. J. Robinson and started in 1843 by the Baptist Association: it was in existence for three years. The *Upadeśaka* was commenced in 1847, and edited by J. Wenger, it continued till 1857, when the editor went home ; it was recommenced in 1863 after his return and ultimately ceased in 1865. The *Satyārṇaba* edited by the missionaries of the Church of England, was begun in 1849: five volumes appear to have been published. The *Aruṇodaya*, a fortnightly journal, was started in 1856 by the Calcutta Tract Society. The first editor was Rev. Lalbehari De. These are, in their chronological order, all the purely Christian periodicals, published during the first half of the century.

APPENDIX V

EARLY CHRISTIAN TRACTS

It is impossible, if it is at all worth while for our purpose, to draw up a complete list of the early Christian tracts in Bengali. A pretty fair list will be found in Murdoch's *Catalogue of Christian Vernacular Literature of India*, Madras 1870. pp. 4-31. But this is by no means exhaustive. See also Long, *Catalogue* (1855), *Return of Names and Writings* etc. (1855), *Return Relating to Bengali Publications* (1859). Some of these tracts will be found in the Serampore College Library and other missionary centres. See also Blumhardt, *Catalogue of Bengali Printed Books in the British Museum* and *Catalogue of Bengali Books in the India Office* Wenger's *Catalogue of Bengali Publications* (1865) supplements Long's *Return Relating toBengali Publications* (1859), and enumerates only those missionary publications which were printed after 1865.

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PART II

BENGALI LITERATURE

IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

SUSHIL KUMAR DE

IN TWO PARTS

PART II

CALCUTTA

CHAPTER I

BEGINNINGS OF ENGLISH EDUCATION

Having regard to the rather haphazard, unpremeditated way in which British rule itself came into being in Bengal, one can realise that the giving or withholding of education was no part of the plans of the British merchants, who suddenly found themselves borne to power and position out of the welter of struggling interests. The collapse of the Mughal administration brought with it moral chaos and the ruin of learning, and it was a long time before the company of calculating shopkeepers had turned into earnest empire-builders; for the idea that Bengal was an estate which yielded a large rental but involved none of the responsibilities of government had been slow to disappear. The task of exhausting and appropriating the functions of the existing Muhammedan government by gradually acquiring zemindary rights, monopolising revenue, assuming civil control and step by step destroying its financial and military supremacy was necessarily a long process; and the rule of the Company at the beginning was actuated by a narrow policy of commercialism from which it was very reluctant to depart. The well known essay of Charles Grant, the public utterance of Lord Minto in 1811 and the testimony of Lord Wellesley,—all bear evidence to the decay of science and learning in Bengal; but the conditions, political and social, were not favourable towards promoting high ideals of public or private conduct, or turn the attention of those in power to the perception of a duty to educate the millions of men who had strangely become subject to a trading company. The promotion of education, neither here nor in England, was regarded as the duty of a civilised government; on the other hand, there was a strong opinion that the introduction of knowledge and education would prove an "absurd and suicidal measure",

as the safety of British dominion in India was thought to depend on keeping the people immersed in ignorance.

FIRST STEP TOWARDS ENGISH EDUCATION (1780-1810)

It is not surprising, therefore, that the first step towards English education in this country was taken by private individuals or by classes of men, who in their modest way founded English schools for the education of Indian boys. A very large number of such schools seems to have sprung up in Bengal even in the period anterior to 1800. If we are to rely on the authority of Hyde,[1] we may take Captain Bellamy's Charity School, which was founded in 1731-32, as the first English school established in Bengal. This school, which started with 8 foundationers and 40 day-scholars, was ultimately amalgamated in 1800 with the Calcutta Free School. Next comes the school of the well known missionary Kiernander, the 'Mammon' of Hicky's Gazette, whom Clive brought to Calcutta in 1758. This school, founded in the same year, began with 48 scholars, of whom only 6 were Bengalis, presumably sons of indigent native Christians. The number rose to a total of 174 scholars in one year; and the Council generously made over the building formerly used as the Collector's office for accommodating this charity school, the whole expense of which (Rs. 900 p. m.) was borne by the rich missionary from his own pocket. The affairs of this school went on satisfactorily till 1788, when it became apparent that this institution, as well as Bellamy's Free School, was unable to cope with the increasing needs of charitable education. A public meeting was called on December 21, 1789, with the Governor-General in the chair, and it was decided to found a Society, called the Free School Society of Bengal. The result of this was that the two funds were united, and a single institution, called the Free School, was established.

1 *Parochial Annals of Bengal*, Calcutta 1901, p. 86.

But between 1780 and 1813, a large number of "mushroom schools" sprang up, such as Archer's School (1780), Mackinon's School (1788), Brown's Boarding School for Young Hindus (1788), Furly's Academy (1793), Holmes's Academy (1795), the schools conducted by Halifax, Lindstedt, Draper, Farrell, Gaynard, Sherbourne and others—into the detailed history of which we need not enter here.[1] Such educational efforts of private individuals, however well meant, could not in their very nature last long, nor could they answer the larger purpose of national education. Some of them were not meant exclusively for Indian boys; even Kiernander's more successful school was meant chiefly for indigent Christians (Armenian, Portuguese, English as well as Bengali) of the Mission Church. Apart from the institutions mentioned above, some of the ephemeral schools, again, had no *bona fide* educational object in view, but were mere makeshifts for earning a living for their needy founders. In those days, the desire of prospering in commercial enterprise under the new condition of things, no doubt, served as an incentive to English education; but penmanship, quickness of calculation and a knowledge of accounts were considered greater accomplishments than a study of the English language or literature itself. Some knowledge of English was sought for, but no systematic course of instruction was given or required; and, for a time, a low and broken English or half-English and half-Bengali gibberish was spoken, of which humorous specimens will be found in Rājnārayāṇ Basu's delightful little sketch of the period. Sometimes, to eke out this half-diction, gesture-language was used somewhat in the manner in which Gulliver spoke to the Lilliputians.

A description of the mode of teaching in these elementary English schools is thus given by W. H. Carey in his *Good Old Days*[2]: "Living upon a rupee a day, the old pensioner smoked

1 See N. N. Law, *Promotion of Learning in India by Early European Settlers* (London 1915), pp. 109f.

2 *Good Old Days of Hon'ble John Company*, Vol. i, pp. 396-97. In

and walked, and smoked and slept his time away. One, more learned perchance than the rest, opened a school; and while the modest widow taught but the elements of knowledge in the barracks of Fort William, the more ambitious proposed to take them up the hill of learning. Let us contemplate him seated in an old-fashioned chair with his legs resting on a cane morah. A long pipe, his most constant companion, projects from his mouth. A pair of loose pyjamas and a charkhana banyan keep him within the pale of society and preserve him cool in the trying hot season of this climate. A rattan, his sceptre, is in his hand, and the boys are seated on stools or little morahs before his pedagogic majesty. They have already read three chapters of the Bible and have got over the proper names without much spelling; they have written their copies—small round text and large hands; they have repeated a column of Entick's Dictionary with only two mistakes, and are now employed in working Compound Division and soon expect to arrive at the Rule of Three. Some of the lads' eyes are red with weeping and others expect to have a taste of the ferula. The partner of the pensioner's days is seated on a low Dinapore matronly chair, picking vegetables and preparing the ingredients for the coming dinner. It strikes 12 o'clock, and the school-master shakes himself. Presently the boys bestir themselves, and for the day the school is broken up".

But there were other educational institutions, which were started not by individuals but by societies of men, and which therefore had promise of greater success and permanence. Most of these schools, however, came into existence between the twenties and forties, after the Hindu College had been established and after English education had become a settled fact. We need not, therefore, linger over their history. The earliest of these was probably the

3 vols. Simla 1882 (Reprinted by Cambray and Co. 2 vols. Calcutta 1908).

school founded at Howrah in March 1783 (then removed to Kidderpore in 1790) by the Military Orphan Society, at the instance of Major-General Kirpatrick; but the school was meant not for Indians but for the children of European officers and soldiers on the Bengal Establishment. At a later time, came the Calcutta Grammar School (June 1823), on the ruins of which arose the Calcutta High School (June 1830) and the Parental Academy founded in 1826 through the efforts of John Miller Ricketts, which subsequently developed into the Doveton College. The efforts of the Missionary Societies in this direction produced better results. Discouraged by authorities and under the Company liable to deportation, they had devoted themselves with courage to education as a means of evangelisation, and for a time made the field their own. Leaving aside Kiernander's school and Brown's short-lived Academy, which we have already mentioned, we have isolated but fairly successful schools started by the Missionaries—the Malda school established by Ellerton as early as 1803, the schools of Carey and other Baptist Missionaries at Serampore and elsewhere, the Chinsurah schools of Robert May (1814), the Burdwan school of Capt. Stewart (1816), the Khulna and Shamnagar schools of Pearson and Harley (1819); but these schools had vernacular education as their primary object. Later on came more ambitious institutions—the Serampore College in 1818, the Bishop's College in 1820, the Parental Academy in 1826 (called Doveton College from 1855), the C.M.S. School in 1829, the General Assembly's Institution in 1830, the St. Xavier's in 1834, La Martiniere in 1836, the Free Church Institution in 1843, and the St. Paul's School (C.M.S.) in 1848-49.

STATE POLICY TOWARDS ENGLISH EDUCATION

It will be observed from what has been said that during the period between 1780 and 1810, numerous schools of a kind had sprung up in Bengal, but no systematic effort was made to place English education upon a firm and recognised

footing as a part of State policy. Individuals of high official rank in the administration of the country, like Charles Grant, Lord Wellesley or Lord Minto, were not altogether oblivious of the moral duty and administrative necessity of spreading knowledge among the people; but the East India Company, like all commercial companies, did not yet recognise the promotion of education as a part of its duty or concern. On the other hand, there was a vast and powerful section of Anglo-Indian administrators who were far from conceding that public instruction should either be undertaken by the State or was free from serious political danger to the security of British dominions in India.

The only effect yet given to the policy of public instruction consisted in the foundation of the Calcutta Madrassa by Warren Hastings in 1781 and the Benares Sanskrit College by Jonathan Duncan in 1791. But both these institutions were, on the one hand, purely oriental in their courses of study, and on the other, their main object was to provide a regular supply of qualified Hindu and Muhammedan law-officers for judicial administration. This tendency towards oriental education was also strongly reinforced by the newly awakened interest in oriental studies which followed upon the researches of Sir William Jones and the foundation in 1784 of the Asiatic Society of Bengal. This may, till the time of Macaulay's Minute, be said to have been the Government policy in education, viz., the revival and encouragement of Sanskrit and Arabic learning. The proposals contained in Lord Minto's Minute of March 6, 1811, in regard to the establishment of Sanskrit Colleges in Nuddea and Tirhoot, proceed upon this policy. But these proposals remained in abeyance until 1821, when the Court of Directors decided[1] that there should be one College instead of two; and this led

1 It was thought that the original plan was fundamentally erroneous, and that the real object should have been to teach not Hindu learning but useful learning. This change of opinion is probably explained by the fact that James Mill was the author of the Minute.

ultimately to the establishment of the Sanskrit College in Calcutta in 1824.

The effect of Lord Minto's representation was that in 1813, under Parliamentary pressure, the Directors sent a Despatch to the effect that a lac of rupees (£ 10,000) should be year by year set apart for educational purposes ; and this may be taken as the first statutory recognition of an educational policy in Bengal. The actual words of the enactment of section 45, St. 53, G. III, c. 155, was that "a sum of not less than one lac of rupees in each year shall be set apart and applied to the revival and improvement of literature and the encouragement of the learned natives of India, and for the introduction and promotion of a knowledge of the sciences among the inhabitants of the British territories". The practical interpretation given to these words—whatever might have been in the minds of the legislators—was that the money was expended in printing Sanskrit and Arabic works, in providing a capacious depository for these oriental folios (for there was little demand for them), and in everflowing patronage to teachers and students of these languages, the "superior and subordinate drones" as Lushington calls them. Trevelyan quotes the amusing instance of a case in which Rs. 32,000 was set apart for translating a work into Arabic, and as the translation happened to be unintelligible, it was proposed to engage the translator on a liberal salary to explain it! No doubt, some good was done by this patronage of ancient learning; but all this was wholly useless for the purpose of general education. In the words of Kerr: "the object of the Committee entrusted with the superintendence of education was chiefly to encourage the cultivation of Sanskrit and Arabic......It is true some slight improvement was attempted... An English class was formed in the Calcutta Madrasa and in the Calcutta Sanskrit College...But these attempts were all on a small scale", and "the whole scope of the institutions was oriental, designed to conciliate old prejudices and to propagate old ideas".

THE VIDYĀLAYA OR HINDU COLLEGE

Previous to 1835, the only large educational establishment[1] supported by Government, which was not oriental in character, was the Vidyālaya, better known as the Hindu College, the forerunner of Presidency College, the opening of which marks an important stage in our history as the first systematic effort made by Indians themselves for English education in Bengal. We must not forget that in the meantime two forces had come into operation, which anticipated and later on strengthened Government in educational enterprise. These were, firstly, the Christian Missionaries ; and secondly, a spontaneous demand for English education on the part of some more advanced-thinking Indians in Calcutta. The aims of the Missionaries were, no doubt, naturally directed to using education not as an end in itself but as a means to evangelisation;[2] but the desire to educate as a means to conversion led them, as it has done ever since, to whole-hearted labours in the cause of education in and for itself. We have already indicated the missionary activity in this direction, which has today culminated in the founding of some of the well known colleges at Calcutta. This effort was powerfully supported by another factor, namely, a newly awakened desire on the part of Indians themselves for a share in the knowledge and training, which they discovered to be a large

1 But for its publications which had a general educative value, the Fort William College (1800), which was reduced in size in 1806, never possessed much importance, as its object was to complete the education of civil servants.

2 Macaulay's indirect object also appears to have been the same. He writes home on Oct. 12, 1836 from Calcutta (G. O. Trevelyan: *Life and Letters of Lord Macaulay*, New ed. vol. i, London 1895, p. 464): "The effect of the education on the Hindus is prodigious. No Hindu who has received an English education ever remains sincerely attached to his religion...... It is my belief that if our plans of education are followed up, there will not be a single idolator among the respectable classes in Bengal thirty years hence. And this will be affected without any effort to proselytise......I heartily rejoice in this prospect."

part of the secret of the superior efficiency of the nations of the West. Naturally, the first stirrings of this impulse, betraying itself dimly in the flourishing of a large number of English schools, remain somewhat obscure; but they took solid and tangible shape in the establishment of the Hindu College by some of the prominent citizens of Calcutta.

Two names are especially associated with the inauguration of this College, namely those of Rāmmohan Rāy and David Hare. It is said that Rāmmohan willingly allowed his name to be laid aside lest his active co-operation should make Hindu orthodoxy take alarm and thus mar the accomplishment of the project of a College in Calcutta for imparting liberal education in English. But his share in the inauguration of the College appears to have been unduly exaggerated[1]. The scheme seems to have originated really with David Hare. In him it found an eager, active and valuable supporter who had already endeared himself to the people by his large-hearted benevolence and interest in education. Hare was neither a Government official nor a Christian missionary, but he represents the purely philanthropic sympathy which Englishmen of those days felt for their land of adoption. He succeeded in enlisting public sympathy for the scheme, which ultimately matured in the inauguration of the Vidyālaya, at first on a modest scale in a house on the Upper Chitpore Road. Year after year, he patiently superintended the growth of the institution; and it was through his efforts that the foundation-stone of the building, originally intended for the Sanskrit College, was ultimately laid in the name of Hindu College in 1824 on a piece of land generously offered by this large-hearted foreigner. Contemporary records are full of references to his quaint figure, dressed in a long blue coat with large brass buttons, moving through the class rooms or attending the debates of the Academic Association, to his

1 Rāmmohan's letter to Lord Amherst on modern education was written much later in December 11, 1823. See below.

old-fashioned *palanqueen* which was a veritable moving dispensary, as well as to his amiable countenance beaming at the hovel of the charity boy or at the bedside of the fever-stricken student. It is in the fitness of things that David Hare's mortal remains, which were denied the rites of Christian burial by an impatient orthodoxy, should lie to this day buried under the monument, erected by a people's love to his memory, on the south side of the tank in the College Square and within sight of the College Street.

The original fund for the College, the subscribers of which were mostly Indians, consisted of the sum of more than one lac of rupees; and the management was for a time exclusively Indian. The College was opened on January 20, 1817; but in 1823 difficulties arose, and Government came to its assistance in 1825 on condition that the College should be open to inspection by Government. This was the way in which the British Government was first brought into active participation in a systematic scheme for English education. To quote the words of Alexander Duff: "English education was in a manner forced upon the British Government; it did not itself spontaneously originate it".

ITS SCHEME OF STUDIES AND TEACHERS

In the scheme of studies of the College, the first place of importance was assigned to English; and a proposal was carried into effect in 1827 of delivering all lectures in English. Of the early teachers associated with this College who did so much for English education in those days, the names of the gifted Eurasian teacher, poet and philosopher, Henry Louis Vivian Derozio, and of the no less illustrious journalist, poet and essayist, David Lester Richardson, stand out prominently. Though but a lad of barely seventeen, Derozio was appointed teacher of English and History in this College in March 1826; but vile columnies circulated by a bigoted but influential section of society made him sever his connexion with it in April 25, 1831, the end of which year also saw his untimely

death of cholera. During the very brief period of his brilliant and pathetic career, however, he not only won the esteem of his colleagues and the loving reverence of his pupils, but he did more than any man then living to arouse, quicken and impel the thoughts of the Young Bengal; and this was indeed the grave offence which called down on him the reviling and abuse of the Christian and Hindu bigots of his day, who took fright at his outspoken treatment of sacred themes. The other teacher in a later stage of the history of the College was Captain Richardson, a young officer of the Bengal army with a strong bent for literature and journalism, and recently invalided from military service. He was made a Professor of the College in 1836, and he became its Principal in 1841. His literary remains bear witness to the width of his culture and scholarship; and the impression which his reading of Shakespeare is said to have created upon Macaulay, one of the distinguished visitors of the College, is well known. Both these teachers established the tradition of an enthusiastic study of English literature, the one by his fluent and impassioned poetry of the Byronic type and the other by his sounder and more scholarly works in verse and prose. Under their guidance and in the simple way described above, English education commenced in Bengal.

In 1835 there were more than 400 students in this College. This was the year of the famous Minute of Thomas Babington Macaulay and of the resolution of Lord William Bentinck, which for the first time adopted the encouragement of English education as State policy. There is some truth indeed in the popular idea that we owe English education in Bengal to Macaulay ; but it is plain that a great deal of qualification is required to such a statement. A college for imparting English education to Indian youths, originating in Indian enterprise, already existed in 1834, when Macaulay came to India ; and when he wrote his Minute in 1835, the number of students had gone up to more than 400. There were numerous schools in Calcutta and elsewhere in which English was

taught. In September 1, 1818, the Calcutta School Society[1] had been formed, chiefly through the efforts of David Hare and Rājā Rādhākānta Deb, for supervising these regular schools, one of the most important schools which the Society brought into existence having been the Arpooly Pāṭhśālā for Bengali and Paṭaldāṅgā School for English teaching,[2] which developed later into the Hare School. Under the patronage of this Society, there were, in 1821, 115 schools with 3,828 scholars; these were, no doubt, vernacular schools, in which Bengali was the medium of instruction, but English was also taught. In 1823 a Committee of Public Instruction had been formed in tardy fulfilment of Lord Minto's representation of 1811. We have also the Court of Director's Despatch, dated September 29, 1830, in which they approve of the "plan of establishing separate colleges for the study of English, for the cultivation of European knowledge, through the medium of the English language". It is not surprising, therefore, that we read in the Report of the Select Committee for 1833 that "a desire for the knowledge of European sciences and literature has been awakened in the natives by the more recent

1 In its first Report (1818) it is said: "Adult female education, the extension and improvement of the indigenous system and the education of a greater number of clever boys in English, as well as providing them with means of acquiring scientific education are all objects of great importance to be vigorously pursued in the metropolis and its vicinity". All this was realised by assisting existing schools and establishing further schools which might be necessary. Pupils of merit were selected for further education in higher seminaries ; and when funds permitted they were given free tuition. See Lushington, *History, Design and Present State of Institutions in Calcutta* (Calcutta 1824), p. 168f at p. 170. The Society was in existence till 1833. The Society was conducted by a Committee consisting of Sir Edward Hyde East, J. H. Harrington (of the Regulation fame), W. B. Bayley, William Carey, J. Pearson, W. H. Macnaghten, Tāriṇī Charaṇ Mitra, Rāmkamal Sen, with David Hare and Rādhākānta Deb as Joint Secretaries. The second annual meeting was held on May 2, 1821.

2 The expenses of these two schools were borne by David Hare himself.

extension and encouragement of education among them". It is also worth recording that the first volume of English verse written by a Bengali author (Kaśī Prasād Ghosh) had appeared five years before Macaulay gave judgment in favour of the teaching of English. All this shows that organised instruction on modern lines and the beginnings of liberal education in English in Bengal must be dated from 1817 rather than from 1835.

MACAULAY'S DECISION ON ENGLISH EDUCATION

We cannot, therefore, ascribe the entire glory or infamy of introducing English education into Bengal to Macaulay. Nevertheless, Macaulay's influence as a determining factor in the fortunes of English education was great, and the part assigned to him in popular estimation is, to a large extent, justified. He did decisively determine the inclination of State influence to the side of English education.

Macaulay was appointed President of the Committee of Public Instruction in December 1834, shortly after his arrival in India. There had been a fundamental difference of opinion in the Committee on the question of the aim that should guide its operations and a division into two parties: a conservative party, the so-called Orientalists,[1] upholding the older policy of encouraging oriental literature, and a forward party, the so-called Anglicists,[2] believing it to be possible to introduce a more useful kind of education through the medium of English.[3] This difference of opinion was in practice a contention over the expenditure of £ 100,000 (increased from

1 The Orientalists in the Committee were: H. Shakespeare, James Prinsep, his brother H. Toby Prinsep, W. H. Macnaghten and T. C. Sutherland.

2 The Anglicists were: W. W. Bird, J. B. Colvin, Saunders, Bushby and Sir Charles Trevelyan.

3 The arguments on both sides are ably summarised by F. W. Thomas in his *History and Prospects of British Education in India*, Cambridge 1891, pp. 33f.

£ 10,000), which had, since 1833, been set apart for educational purpose by Act of Parliament. Both the parties based their arguments on the Charter of 1813; but the conservative orientalists were for continuing to devote this sum to the printing of Sanskrit and Arabic books and the payment of stipends to the Paṇḍit or the Maulavi, while the innovating occidentalists were for diverting at least a part of it to English education. The Committee numbered ten ; the two parties on it were nicely balanced, five against five ; the dispute had for more than two years obstructed its business. At last both the parties became convinced that the usefulness and respectability of their body would be utterly compromised by longer continuance of the quarrel, which should now be authoritatively settled. In January 1835, the members took the only course which remained open to them, and placed before the Governor-General in Council a statement of their existing position and of the conflicting opinions held by them. Macaulay as Legislative Member of the Supreme Council recorded his opinion in the Minute which has now become famous. He framed the issue very dearly by stating: "We have a fund to be employed, as Government shall direct, for the intellectual improvement of the people of this country. The simple question is, what is the most useful way of employing it?" He had no difficulty in showing that in realising this object they were not fettered by the Charter of 1813 nor by any pledge expressed or implied, but that they were free to employ the funds as they chose in teaching "what is best worth knowing". He declared in clear terms that "English is better worth knowing than Sanscrit and Arabic", as being presumably the key to more useful knowledge. It was also easy enough for him to show that there was already an effective demand for English, whereas the study of Sanskrit and Arabic could only be kept up artificially by the award of stipends, and that already many Indians had a remarkable command of English, so that there could be no doubt of their being able to master English sufficiently for the

purpose in view. He therefore decided in favour of English education.

The long-standing controversy was thus terminated by Macaulay's energetic rhetoric, and an effective end was put to the orientalistic tendency of Government educational policy. His Minute was dated February 2, 1835. On March 7, Lord Bentinck quickly came to the Resolution that "the great object of the British Government ought to be the promotion of European literature and science among the natives of India, and that all funds appropriated for the purposes of education would be best employed on English education alone."

The decisive step was taken, but the admission must be made that there was indeed much that Macaulay did not realise when he wrote his Minute, which was too vigorous, too sweeping and too confident to be wholly true. He was perhaps too hasty in putting little stress on vernacular education. He took perhaps a narrowly utilitarian view in coming to the conclusion that the study of Sanskrit and Arabic in this country had no peculiar claim to encouragement. With characteristic want of hesitation he thought it enough to provide only for the intellectual side of education. He did not explore all the possibilities and tendencies of English education in India, nor did he take into account the disintegrating effect which the new ideas of the West were likely produce in the East. He never had the time to enter into the right relation to the country whose destiny he was called upon to decide.

These and other defects, however, do not alter the real issue: was he right upon the main question? It is possible that we know today more about English education and can judge the event by its results; we can perhaps see further than Macaulay did, and would hesitate before we decide in the same way again. But all this does not alter the fact that Macaulay took the only sound and possible course open to him on the question which had arisen,—a question which was

larger than the mere settling of the future medium of expression, deeper than the dispute dividing the Committee. The strength of his position lay in the fact that he could look beyond the pettiness of the immediate issue, and gauge accurately the aspiration and demand which had expressed themselves in the march of events culminating in the foundation of the Hindu College. The question which he was called upon to decide and which alone we should consider here, was not whether it was right or wrong to introduce English education, but whether it was proper to admit or refuse to admit to Western culture the people of Bengal, when they asked for it and when their political history brought them within the gates. "We are withholding from them" Macaulay wrote "the learning for which they are craving; we are forcing upon them the mock learning which they nauseate." That this was, despite its exaggeration, essentially true is proved by the vigorous demand made for English education which led to the establishment of the Hindu College and the schools which fed it; it is also proved by the opposition of Rāmmohan Rāy and others to the multiplying of Sanskrit Colleges. "The tide had set in strongly" remarks Trevelyan "in favour of English education, and when the Committee declared itself on the same side, the public support they received rather went beyond than fell short of what was required." The eagerness for English education is also borne out by the number of books sold by the School Book Society, which was established in July 1817 for the express purpose of preparing and supplying useful books for use in the schools.[1] In the 6th Report of the Society, dated 1825, we read: "Since the commencement of the Society, more than 100,000 school-books have been put in circulation." Between January 1834, and December 1835,

1 The Committee of the Society was composed of sixteen European and eight Indian members ; among them we find Carey and Roebuck, as well as Mṛtyuñjaya Vidyālaṅkār, Tāriṇī Charaṇ Mitra, Rāmkamal Sen and Rādhakānta Deb.

they sold over thirty-one thousand five hundred copies of English books and made a profit of 20 per cent. on the outlay, while the Education Committee could dispose of only fifty-two copies of Sanskrit and Arabic books, which was not enough to pay even the expense of keeping them for two months, to say nothing of the cost of printing.[1]

It will be seen from this short account that English education in Bengal was in the beginning as inevitable as English rule in this country; that it is the people more than the Government who first brought it about; that the rising tide of the demand for such education could not be checked; that it is an exaggeration to attribute to Macaulay the whole credit or discredit of introducing English education; and that the movement had begun independently of Macaulay's rhetoric and Bentinck's decision and had achieved definite results before the famous Resolution of 1835. To Macaulay, however, belongs the credit of not mistaking the tendencies when they were apt to be obscured by the reactionary oppositions which dictated partially the previous cautious policy of Government; to him also belongs the credit of hastening and strengthening the movement by bringing the support of the State to bear upon it. Western culture may not have proved an unmixed blessing; but under the circumstances and in the environment such as they were, no other decision would perhaps have been more suitable. The advent of the English as rulers of Bengal meant the advent of English ideas; it was inevitable that these ideas should germinate and take root in the surrounding soil; they belong to the spirit of the time.

1 The printing of these Oriental books was stopped by Bentinck's proclamation, and the funds thus set free was employed in promoting English education. Six new schools were immediately opened, and six more were added in the following year. In 1835-36 there were 23 institutions all told under Government, but the number of schools of Sanskrit and Arabic gradually diminished.

STATE OF BENGALI EDUCATION

It is necessary in this connexion to understand the character and extent of indigenous education which existed at the time of the spread of English education. The testimony of the early missionaries, as well as that of the Young Bengal, who were occupied in denouncing everything Hindu, is generally too sweeping and prejudiced; and it is not until Lord Bentinck appointed W. Adam to investigate the state of indigenous education in Bengal and Bihar that we have reliable facts and figures given in his three Reports, which appeared respectively in 1835, 1836 and 1838. For the Hindus there were at this time the elementary Pāṭhśālās which gave slight vernacular instruction and the more advanced Ṭols or Catuṣpāṭhīs which were chiefly centres of Sanskrit learning. For the Muhammedans in the same way there were elementary schools where instruction was given chiefly through Persian, and the more advanced Muktabs where Arabic was chiefly studied. But since Persian was the language of the law-courts and partly of business throughout the Muhammedan rule, and under the British till 1835, it is not surprising that a large number of students in the Persian schools was Hindu. These elementary schools carried on a somewhat precarious existence, which depended chiefly on the gifts of well-to-do men. Women's education was of a meagre character, confined chiefly to prosperous families. From the general statistics arrived at by enquiries instituted by Lord Bentinck (as well as Lord Elphinstone in Bombay and Sir Thomas Munroe in Madras) it appears[1] that on an average one boy out of ten of the proper age was in the years 1820-40 receiving some kind of indigenous education. Adam's estimate for Bengal and Bihar is that on the whole about 7·8 per cent of children of the school age were being taught at school and over 5·2 per cent at home, giving a total percentage of 13. Leaving aside the almost uninstructed lower orders, it seems that men

1 See F. W. Thomas, *op. cit.*, chap. i.

of middle rank, including landholding and trading classes, received a scanty and mostly commercial instruction in reading, writing and arithmetic. There was a considerable body of the Brahman class who partook of what may be called liberal education, chiefly through Sanskrit, while not a few further obtained eminence in such special studies as grammar, logic, law, ritual, theology or metaphysics. What was taught in the Ṭols was well taught, and the attainments were not inferior to those of any ancient nation, or to those of European scholars prior to the Renaissance. But if the training was thorough, it also produced its characteristic results in fostering an unworldliness and devotion to knowledge, and an intellectual isolation and class-feeling. In certain sections it bred a narrow bigotry seldom witnessed in any other country. From this unvarnished picture it is clear that consequent upon the unsettled state of the country, which told severely upon the people's energy and mental outlook, there was a decline not only in their social and religious condition but also in the state of general education. It is not unjustly said that indigenous learning at this period in Bengal was somewhat of the same character as that of European learning before the invention of printing.

THE ANGLICISTS AND VERNACULARISTS

It is no wonder, therefore, that as soon Bentinck's Resolution settled the controversy between the Anglicists and the Orientalists, it started another controversy between the Anglicists and the Vernacularists. The benefits of liberal education through the medium of English was, no doubt, placed on a firm basis, but they were reaped only by a limited number of students, generally of the middle class. It was argued that ultimately the knowledge, thus acquired, would "filter down" through them to the masses. But in the actual working out of the system the disproportionate attention paid to English education of middle class youths stood out clearly against the neglected education of the masses through

the vernacular schools. Adam was no believer in the filtration theory, nor in the efficacy of English as a medium of instruction. In his Reports he described the miserable condition of vernacular schools and widespread ignorance and superstition resulting from it. It was felt, therefore, that the best means of education was the promotion and improvement of indigenous village schools. In his minute of 1839 Lord Auckland recognised the claims not only of the sacred languages but also of the vernacular, while Lord Hardinge in 1844 opened 101 vernacular schools in different parts of Bengal. But nothing was done towards the evolving of a comprehensive and co-ordinated system of education for nearly twenty years till the next revision of the E. I. Co.'s Charter. A Parliamentary Committee was appointed on that occasion to examine the whole subject. The result was the memorable Despatch of Sir Charles Wood, dated July 19, 1854. The new scheme set forth in this Despatch proposed a graduated system of education, both English and vernacular, by means of an adequate number of efficient teaching institutions, beginning from primary and middle schools and ending in colleges. A separate department for the administration of education on these lines is to be instituted with an adequate system of inspection. There should be provision for scholarships for meritorious students and for grants-in-aid to private educational institutions. For co-ordinating higher education there should be a University in each of the three Presidency towns, established as an examining body on the model of London University. Although the new scheme did not entirely depart from the original motive of English education, stress was laid on mass education by an increased attention to vernacular schools, on the training of teachers for all classes of schools, and on the importance of women's education. It will be seen from this brief account that Wood's Despatch of 1854 envisaged a comprehensive and systematic scheme, and laid the foundation on which education in Bengal has since developed.

But all this was not completed until nearly the close of this period of our history. In the meantime we turn to the Hindu College which became the most important seminary for the spread of English education in Bengal in the second quarter of the 19th century.

CHAPTER II

THE HINDU COLLEGE AND THE REFORMING YOUNG BENGAL

DAVID HARE AND THE HINDU COLLEGE

The history of the Hindu College embodies the history of modern Bengali culture in the second and third quarters of the nineteenth century; but it is somewhat extraordinary that of the names of all the persons who were instrumental in establishing the institution, the name of a foreigner should occupy a prominent place. But perhaps no foreigner in Bengal has ever pursued so remarkable a career as David Hare (1775-1842). Himself a man of limited education, he is gratefully remembered to-day as one of the founders of English education in Bengal. Never directly connected with teaching, nor openly assuming the role of a reformer, he was yet an educator and reformer in the best sense of the terms. Hare affords the remarkable, and perhaps the solitary, instance in Bengal of a foreigner who without any refinement of education, without high intellectual endowments, without place or power or wealth, acquired and retained a most important and influential position in the history of modern culture in Bengal, simply by a constant and sincere endeavour for unostentatious service.

The facts of David Hare's life are very few and can be told very briefly.[1] Son of a watchmaker in London, who had married an Aberdeen lady, Hare came out to Calcutta in 1800 at the age of twenty-five as a watch-maker; and, after following that profession for several years, he made over his concern on January 1, 1820 to his friend, one Mr. Grey, under whose roof he led his bachelor life till his death

1 *A Biographical Sketch of David Hare*, by Peary Chand Mittra, Calcutta 1877.

on June 1, 1842 at the age of sixty-seven. Instead of returning to his native country, like the rest of his countrymen, with the competence he had acquired, he adopted for his own the country of his sojourn, and cheerfully devoted the remainder of his life to the one object dear to himself, namely, the spread of Western education, for which he spared neither personal trouble, nor money, nor influence.

As early as 1815 Hare formed an estimate of the educational needs of the country, and determined that there should be English and vernacular schools and supply of good English and vernacular books on an extensive scale. A man of great energy and strong practical sense, he realised that the cause of social and intellectual reform can be best served by establishing a higher school or college for the instruction of Bengali youths in modern knowledge. Rāmmohan Rāy, who was interested in modern education, is said to have agreed to the strength of Hare's position;[1] but he does not appear to have given any further support, direct or indirect, to the scheme.[2] Hare was able to attract the attention of the leading citizens of Calcutta and, among them, of the Chief Justice, Sir Edward Hyde East,[3] who took a lively interest in the matter. After ascertaining that the leading members of the Hindu community in Calcutta were favour-

1 Peary Chand Mittra, *op. cit.*, p. 5; S. D. Collet, *Life and Letters of Raja Rammohun Roy*. London 1900, pp. 21-22.

2 The story of the inauguration of the College is told by Sir Edward Hyde East in his letter to J. Harrington (dated May 18, 1816), quoted in *JBORS*, xvi, pt. 2, p. 155f ; but "the Brahmin of Calcutta" mentioned in the letter refers to Baidyanāth Mukherji, and not to Rāmmohan (as sometimes alleged). See *Saṃbād-patre Sekāler Kathā*, ii, 3rd Ed., p. 708, where Brajendra Nath Banerji discusses the whole question. Rāmmohan never had any share in the inauguration nor any interest in the later continuance of College. His own English school was not started till the Hindu College scheme had matured, while his letter to Lord Amherst was not written until 1823.

3 Sir Edward was Chief Justice of the Supreme Court during 1813-22.

able to the proposal. Sir Edward mooted the subject in several meetings held at his house and came to the conclusion that "an establishment be founded for the education of native youths". A large joint committee of ten European and twenty Indian gentlemen[1] was appointed to carry the resolution into effect, with Sir Edward as President, J. H. Harrington of the Regulation fame as Vice-President and Lieut. (afterwards Major) Irvine and Baidyanāth Mukhopādhyāy as Secretaries.

THE HINDU COLLEGE OPENED ON 1817

The Hindu College, or the Mahāvidyālaya (or simply the Vidyālaya) as it was originally called, was the direct result of this movement. It was formally opened on Monday, January 20, 1817 at Gorā Chānd Basāck's house on the Upper Chitpore Road. It was afterwards removed to Rūp Charaṇ Rāy's house in Chitpore, and then to Firinghi Kamal Bose's house at Jorasanko. The College represents the first effort made by the Indian themselves for the education of their children in English language and literature. The object of the institution, as described in the printed rules published in 1822, was "to instruct the sons of the Hindoos in the European and Asiatic languages and sciences." It was originally proposed to teach English, Persian, Sanskrit and Bengali, but the first place of importance was assigned to literary education in English, Sanskrit having been discontinued at an early stage and the Persian classes abolished in 1841.[2] The reports of 1827 and 1828 state that "The studies in the Institution were Natural and Experimental Philosophy, Chemistry,

1 Kissory Chānd Mittra, The Hindu College and its Founder, Appendix B to Peary Chānd Mittra, *op. cit.*, p.viif, at p.xiv; Rādhākānta Deb in his letter to Peary Chand (*op. cit.* p. 39). The first meeting at Sir Edward's residence was held on May 14, 1816; and more than fifty Hindu residents of Calcutta, including some Paṇḍits, attended the meeting.

2 Persian was abolished as a court language in 1836.

Mathematics, Tytler's Elements of General History, Russell's Modern Europe, with Milton and Shakespeare." The institution was meant to supply liberal education in English, but prominence was given to the study of English language and literature, and from 1826 all lectures were delivered in English. For the first time English language was cultivated in this college, not as done before to the slight extent necessary to carry on business with Europeans, but as the most convenient channel through which access was to be obtained to the literature of the West.

The institution soon grew in popularity, and in course of time claimed superiority over every other institution affording similar instruction. The system of demanding fees from scholars was not at first successful, and the Committee of Management accordingly resolved that from January 1, 1819 the College should be a free institution. But from 1823 the number of paying scholars steadily grew, and at the end of 1825, 1826, 1827 and 1828 it rose respectively to 110, 223, 300 and 336.[1]

The College was started with a fund of Rs. 1,13,179 raised by public subscription, and for several years after its establishment it was strictly an Indian enterprize and received no aid from Government. From the printed rules of the College it appears that "At a meeting held on the 11th June, 1816, the European members withdrew from an active participation in the management of the College desiring only to be considered as private friends to the scheme and as ready to afford their advice and assistance when consulted." Accordingly in December 1816 Gopī Mohan Ṭhākur was elected Governor, and Gopī Mohan Deb, Joy Kṛṣṇa Siṃha, Rādhāmādhab Bandyopādhyāy and Gaṅgānārāyaṇ Das were made Directors of the institution, with Baidyanāth Mukhopādhyāy as Secretary ; these also formed the Committee of Manage-

1 In 1819 the total number of scholars was 70, but it increased to 433, 421, 409 in 1828-29-30 respectively. (F. W. Thomas, *op. cit.* p. 27).

ment, which was elected annually. Hare was nominated a Visitor of the College on June 12, 1819; and among the early friends of the institution must be mentioned Rām Kamal Sen, and Rādhākānta Deb who succeeded his father Gopī Mohan Deb as an active member of the College Committee. But the financial position of the College was not all that could be desired. The monthly income[1] between 1824 and 1833 fluctuated between Rs. 800 to Rs. 3,272; but the greatest financial catastrophe came on April 25, 1825 with the failure of Joseph Baretto and Sons, in whose firm the subscribed capital was deposited, although after a delay of two years the Management were fortunate enough to retrieve Rs. 21,000 out of the wreck of the firm. Partly from this loss of its endowments, partly from inexperience and partly also from the apathy of its original supporters, the affairs of the College were in a bad way; and we have the contemporary testimony, recorded later on by Alexander Duff, that "had it not been for the untiring perseverance of Mr. Hare, the college would have soon come to an end." In 1823 the Management in their financial difficulty applied to Government for aid and for providing a suitable building. Government came generously forward to help the institution[2]

1 In 1824 the monthly receipts of the college amounted to Rs. 840. At the end of 1826 they came up to Rs. 1,115, and two years later to Rs. 1,700. In 1830 the total income rose to Rs. 3,272, of which Rs. 1,500 were raised by fees alone. But there were vicissitudes, and at the end of 1833 we learn that the receipts had fallen off to Rs. 800. Since then, with Government aid, there was a gradual increase till the sum reached Rs. 30,000. The individual tuition fee charged from all classes, junior and senior, was at first Rs. 5, but it was afterwards raised to Rs. 8 in the college department, Rs. 6 in the senior school and Rs. 5 in the junior school.

2 The Government aid in the first instance was to the extent of Rs. 300 a month. In 1827 it was raised to Rs. 900, and in 1830 to Rs. 1,250 a month. In 1829 Government made an additional grant of Rs. 5,000 for purchasing books for the library. In 1840 the contribution of Government amounted to Rs. 30,000, and it began from this time to take a more active interest in the affairs of the college through the

but on the understanding that the Committee of Public Instruction would be given the right of supervision over the administration of funds supplied by Government. These conditions[1] were accepted, and Dr. Horace Hayman Wilson[2] (1786-1860) was nominated on behalf of Government as Visitor to the College. He was accordingly elected an ex-officio member of the College Committee and became its Vice-President. Hare was made an Honorary member of the Committee. Through the influence of these two men arrangements were at last made for the erection of a building to house the College, but it was proposed that with Government grant of Rs. 1,24,000 for the purpose, the building should also accommodate the Sanskrit College. David Hare made a gift of the piece of land he owned on the north side of the College Square, where on February 25, 1824 the foundation-stone of the Hindu College was laid. The building was completed and occupied by the College on May 1, 1826.

Committee of Public Instruction. In course of time the interference went further, and a collision of authority raised the general question of the management of the college. In a conference held as early as 1844 of the leading members of the two bodies, the Indian members agreed to withdraw their connexion with the college in consideration of Government undertaking to enlarge and improve the institution. As a consequence the Hindu College as such was abolished on June 15, 1855, the junior department continuing in the shape of the Hindu School, and the senior department as Presidency College, of which it formed the nucleus. In this way Presidency College as such came into being as the first Government College for imparting European education to Indian youths.

1 There was at first a protest from Rādhāmādhab Bandyopādhyāy and Chandra Kumār Ṭhākur who were suspicious of Government interference and maintained that the institution might be left to its own resources. But on an assurance received from the Committee of Public Instruction that their supervision would be limited only to the funds supplied by Government, their financial assistance was accepted, chiefly through the persuasion of David Hare.

2 Wilson, who is remembered to-day chiefly as a Sanskritist, had a varied career as a linguist, historian, educationist, chemist and

From the brief sketch of the origin of Hindu College given above it is clear that the credit which is usually given to David Hare not only for its foundation but also for its continuance is not unjustified ; but in saying this no injustice is done to those who toiled and strove with him loyally in the achievement of the same object. The idea originated with him, and his eagerness to translate it into reality proved a stimulating power in the circle of those who knew him and shared his faith and determination. Without the support of his able coadjutors, not much perhaps would have been achieved, but the moral force behind the venture was supplied by his indomitable, if unobtrusive, optimism and perseverance. He allowed himself to be made an honorary member of the Committee of Management only at a later stage[1] ; but even in an unofficial capacity he watched over the institution

numismatist. Born in Sept. 26, 1786 and educated at St. Thomas's Hospital in London, he came to Calcutta in 1808 in the medical service of the E.I.Co., but he was attached for his knowledge of Chemistry and Assay, to the Mint at Calcutta, of which he was appointed Assay-master in 1816. He studied Sanskrit, contributed widely to the learned journals of the day on a variety of subjects, and became Secretary to the Asiatic Society of Bengal in 1811-33, with short intervals. He was also Secretary to the Committee of Public Instruction. He subsequently became the first Boden Professor of Sanskrit at Oxford (1832), Librarian of the India House (1836), F.R.S. (1834) and Director of Royal Asiatic Society from 1837 till his death on May 8, 1860. His well-known publications on Oriental literature are: *Select Specimens of the Theatre of the Hindus*, 2 vols. (1826-27); Translations of the *Meghadūta* (1813), the *Viṣṇu Purāṇa* (1840), and the *Ṛg-Veda* (6 vols); a Sanskrit-English Dictionary (1819; new ed. 1832); new edition and continuation of Mill's *History of British India* (1844-48) and of Macnaghten's *Hindu Law*; a *Glossary of Judicial and Revenue Terms of India* (1855); and *Lectures on the Religious and Philosophical Systems of the Hindus* (1840).

1 Hare was officially nominated a Visitor of the College on June 12, 1819, and a Manager of the College in 1825 (according to Rādhākānta Deb). His naturally unobtrusive deposition kept him in the background in the early stages, although he was one of the earliest and most active promoters of the institution.

with a parent's tenderness throughout the experimental stage, and this feeling did not abate even after it had struggled to stability and distinction.

It would be unjust to criticise the motive which prompted Hare to inaugurate this decisive movement towards Western education as an insidious attempt to westernise the East. Men like Hare sincerely believed that they were going to ensure to India "the vast moral and material blessings" arising out of the general diffusion of useful knowledge; but it must not also be forgotten that the demand had come from the people themselves before it was thrust upon them. Even though these pioneers of English education in Bengal made no attempt at concealing their deep and vital conviction of the material and moral superiority of the West and in giving effect to the wide-spread belief in the efficacy of "useful knowledge"; yet in introducing an alien education they did nothing more than gauge accurately the signs of the time and gather into a focus the growing popular demand. But Hare did more than merely share in this belief of the age. He had also the conviction that the Indians never lacked the elements of greatness and prosperity in their mental equipment and material resources of the land, and that all they needed at a critical time of their history was a potent and rational stimulus in the shape of the quickening influence of Western knowledge in order to reawaken in them the spirit of enterprise and thirst for knowledge which had been for the time being extinguished. His faith in what he considered to be the proper destiny of the Indian people and the remedial virtue of English education found an embodiment in the Hindu College and in the schools which were brought into being. Hare's life was rich in sympathy and service and in the inspiration which comes from a lofty aim steadily pursued, and for these reasons his influence was great; but even his influence could not have ensured the ultimate success of the movement had not the time been opportune for its appearance.

HENRY LOUIS VIVIAN DEROZIO

In March 1826[1] Henry Louis Vivian Derozio, a pupil of David Drummond at the Dhurmtollah Acadamy, was appointed[2] teacher of English literature and History in the Second and Third Classes of the Hindu College. This appointment, seemingly so insignificant, was destined to mark the early development of one of the most important movements in the intellectual history of the Young Bengal of this period. When Derozio came to this college as a teacher he was a lad of barely seventeen, and his connexion with it lasted only for five years; but no other teacher ever taught with greater zeal and with more loving intercourse between teacher and pupil, and no other wielded a more amazing influence on young minds than this Anglo-Indian boy of extraordinary intellectual and moral gifts.

Son of Francis and Sophia Derozio (née Johnson), H.L.V. Derozio was born[3] on April 18, 1809. The house in which he was born stood on the suburban side of the Lower Circular Road, a little to the north of St. Theresa's Church[4]. Although Derozio was the second of a family of five children, his father, who occupied the position of the Chief Accountant

1 See Brajendranath Banerji, *Saṃbād-patre Sekāler Kathā*, vol. i. p. 28. Thomas Edwards (*Henry Derozio, the Eurasian Poet, Teacher and Journalist*, Calcutta 1884, p. 30) gives the date March 1828, but at p. 66 he speaks of "Hindu College during 1828, a year after Derozio's appointment". E.W. Madge (Memoir of Derozio, prefixed to B.B. Shah's ed. of Derozio's Poems, vol. i, Calcutta 1907) gives the date November 1826. Kiśorī Chānd Mittra gives 1827 as the date of Derozio's appointment. All these dates appear to be incorrect.

2 On Rs. 150 a month.

3 E.W. Madge (*op.cit.*) and F.B. Bradley-Birt (*Poems of Derozio*, p. iv) give the date as the 18th April; while Edwards (*op.cit*) and other authorities give it as 10th April. The former date appears to be the correct one.

4 The house is now pulled down and replaced by a modern residence. Derozio's mother was an Englishwoman, while his father was a Eurasian of Portuguese descent.

in the Agency firm of James Scott and Company, was anxious to give his son the best literary education that could then be obtained in Calcutta. From the early age of six to the age of fourteen Derozio was put in the hands of David Drummond (1785-1843), whose Academy has been characterised as the best in the years before the Hindu College. This crooked-back but straight-minded native of Fifeshire, who had drunk deep of the metaphysics and the muse of Scotland and who left his country in 1813 because of his proneness to free thinking, watched the precocious and impulsive Derozio with interest, and fed his young intellect and imagination with all that was best in the poetry and philosophy of the West. Derozio became little of the usual classical scholar of the day, for his chief delight was in the literature and thought of England as embodied in its best thinkers and writers, and he imbibed not a little of his master's inclination towards free thinking. On leaving school in 1823 he became a clerk in his father's office, but the drudgery of the desk had no fascination for him. At the age of nearly sixteen he left the office-stool for the varied work and life of an Indigo-planter under the hospitable roof of his uncle Arthur Johnson at Bhagalpore. There, with the ripple of the river in his ear and its music in his heart, the boy-poet began to weave his *Fakeer of Jungheera*[1], an immature production, no doubt, but his most sustained and remarkable effort in poetical composition. It is not known on what date he returned to Calcutta, but he published in 1827 his first volume of *Poems*[2], dedicating it to

1 *The Fakeer of Jungheera, a Metrical Tale and Other Poems* by Henry Louis Vivian Derozio. Samuel Smith & Co. Hurkaru Library, Calcutta 1828. Dedicated to Horace Hayman Wilson. The work is prefaced by Derozio's well-known sonnet *My country in the day of glory past.*

2 *Poems* by H.V.L. Derozio. Calcutta, Printed for the Author at the Baptist Mission Press, and sold by Messrs. S. Smith and Co. Hurkaru Library, Calcutta 1827. On the title-page appears a quotation (*If the pulse of the patriot, soldier or lover,* etc.) from Moore's *Harp of Erin.* His best and most representative poems have been collected

Dr. John Grant, Editor of the *India Gazette*, to which he used to send his youthful poetical contributions under the signature of Juvenis. His poems show the obvious influence of Byron and Moore, but they also indicate considerable poetic feeling, play of fancy and gift of expression. He is said to have been appointed sub-editor of the *Gazette*, and his literary attainments and fame as a promising young writer, who contributed to some of the literary journals of the day, obtained for him in March 1826 the appointment of a teacher of English literature and History at Hindu College[1].

Of his teaching, eloquent testimonies have been left by his pupils and contemporaries, but the effect is best seen in the profound, abiding, if at first disturbing, influence which he exerted over the brilliant young minds of that generation. The ground covered by English literature and History in the first three classes of the Hindu College in 1828 will be clear from the curriculum, which included, among other things, Goldsmith's History of Greece, Rome and England, Russell's Modern Europe, Robertson's Charles V, Gay's Fables, Pope's Homer's Iliad and Odyssey, Dryden's Virgil, Milton's Paradise Lost and one of Shakespeare's Tragedies. Derozio taught second and third classes, but his teaching, like that of all great teachers, was not confined to the text-books alone. After college hours and in the intervals of teaching he was ever ready in conversation to aid his pupils in their studies, gave them extra readings from English literature, led them

together recently by F. Bradley-Birt in his *Poems by Louis Vivian Derozio* (Oxford Univ. Press 1923).

1 For more details about Derozio, see Thomas Edwards, *op. cit.*; Peārī Chānd Mittra, *op. cit.*; F. Bradley-Birt, *op. cit.* pp. i-lix; *Oriental Magazine*, October 1843, reproduced in the *Bengal Obituary* (1851) and in Owen Aratoon's edition of Derozio's Poems; T. P. Manuel. *The Poetry of Our Indian Poets*, 1861; W. T. Webb, Anglo-Indian Verse in *India Review*, 1883; H. A. Stark and E.W. Madge, *East Indian Worthies*, Calcutta 1892; E.W. Madge, *Forgotten Anglo-Indian Bards*, a Lecture, Calcutta 1896, and *Henry Derozio, the Eurasian Poet and Reformer*, a Lecture at the Calcutta Y.M.C.A. (Dec. 1904).

through the pages of Locke, Reid, Hume and Dugald Stewart, and thus laid bare before their vision a new world of ripe thought and daring speculation, a literature and history full of high thoughts and noble efforts. It was about this time that he is said to have written a critique on the philosophy of Kant, a work which is now lost, but which elicited from Dr. W. H. Mills, then Principal of Bishop's College and afterwards Canon of Ely, the high praise of having been "perfectly original" and having displayed "powers of reasoning and observation which would not disgrace even gifted philosophers."[1]

But it was not in the class room[2] that Derozio's buoyant spirit, his ready humour, his wide culture, his ardent imagination, his readiness to impart knowledge and free thinking could find adequate expression. In consort with his pupils he established in 1828 or 1829 a debating club, known as the Academic Association, which met weekly at a garden house in Maniktala belonging to Śrīkṛishna Siṃha. Here night after night, under the presidency of Derozio and with Umācharaṇ Bose as Secretary, the boys of the Hindu College read and discussed and debated all topics of interest, literary and philosophical, and acquired for themselves not only the facility of expression and argument but also the habit of thinking freely as seekers after truth. David Hare, in his white jacket and old-fashioned gaiters, was a regular visitor at these meetings and became President of the Association

1 See *Bengal Obituary* (Calcutta 1851), p. 104. Derozio also delivered a course of lectures on Modern British Poets, which was published after his death in the *Calcutta Literary Gazette* of October 13, 1833.

2 About his mode of teaching Pyārī Chānd, himself a student of the college, writes (p. 29), "He used to impress upon his pupils the sacred duty of thinking for themselves—to be in no way influenced by the idols mentioned by Bacon—to live and die for truth—to cultivate and practice all the virtues, shunning vice in every shape. He often read examples from ancient history of the love of justice, patriotism, philanthropy and self-abnegation, and the way in which he set forth the points stirred the minds of the pupils".

after Derozio resigned ;[1] but the occasional presence of distinguished visitors like Sir Edward Ryan, Dr. Miller and Colonel Benson indicates the high level and interest of its lectures and discussions. Among the members of this Association were Kṛṣṇa Mohan Banerji, Rasik Kṛṣṇa Mallick, Kāśī Prasād Ghosh, Dakṣiṇā Rañjan Mukherji, Rāmgopal Ghosh, Rāmtanu Lāhiri, Rādhānāth Sikdār Mādhāb Chandra Mallik, Hara Chandra Ghosh, Gobinda Chandra Basāck, Pyārī Chānd Mittra and others,—all of whom became in later times the leading men of their generation. Under Derozio's direction the advanced students of the College issued a paper called the *Pantheon*,[2] but it was soon stopped by Dr. H. H. Wilson, the Visitor of the College. Himself a free thinker, though not a sceptic or an atheist on his own confession, Derozio impressed upon his pupils the duty of thinking freely ; but the freedom of thought and action which he inculcated affected their ancestral faith and culminated not only in an open renunciation of Hindu orthodoxy but also in a spirit of aggressive heterodoxy.

The Managing Committee of the College naturally took alarm and passed a resolution that Mr. D'Anseleme,[3] the Head Master, "be requested, in communication with the teachers, to check as far as possible all disquisitions leading to unsettle the belief of the boys in the great principles of national religion". But the dangerous doctrines of rationalism were producing their first disturbing effect, and the rising tide of free enquiry could not be stemmed. Derozio's influence extended over a larger area than the immediate

1 Peārī Chānd Mittra, *op. cit.* p. 64. From a letter of Rāmgopāl Ghosh, dated Aug. 12, 1838 (quoted in R.G. Sanyal's *Bengal Celebrities*, vol. I, Calcutta 1889, p. 176) we learn that the Academic Association was getting on very miserably after its leading spirit was gone, but it lingered on till March 31, 1839.

2 See *Calcutta Review*, 1911 (On the Vernacular Press in India), pp. 26-27. This was the first English weekly conducted by Indians.

3 D'Anselem resigned on July 2, 1831.

sphere of personal influence. Headless of the injunction of authorities, young students of Calcutta continued to flock as usual to the meetings of the Association, as well as gather round Derozio's hospitable table in his house at Circular Road. As Kṛṣṇa Mohan Banerji, one of the students of the College, puts it: "The authority of the Hindu religion was questioned, its sanctions impeached, its doctrines ridiculed, its philosophy despised, its ceremonies accounted fooleries, its injunctions openly violated and its priesthood defied as an assembly of fools, hypocrites and fanatics". In February 1830 further orders were issued by the Management, calling upon the teachers, on the pain of dismissal, "to abstain from any communication on the subject of the Hindu religion with the boys, or to suffer any practices inconsistent with the Hindu notions of propriety such as eating and drinking in school and class room". The Christian Missionaries of Calcutta, in the meantime, headed by Dr. Duff, availed themselves of this growing unrest and arranged a series of lectures on Christianity at Dr. Duff's house at College Square, nearly opposite the Hindu College.[1]

David Hare, hardly an orthodox Christian[2], was apprehensive of the intentions of the Missionaries, and the Manage-

1 It was arranged that the first lecture on the Internal and External Evidences of Christianity was to be delivered by Dr. Duff: the second on the Testimony of History and Fulfilled Prophecy by John Adam of London Missionary Society, a fellow-student of Duff's at St. Andrews; the third on Christ and the Four Gospels, and the Genius and Temper of His Religion by Rev. James Hill, Pastor of the Union Chapel. Dr. Thomas Dealtry (1796-1861), Chaplain of the Old Mission Church (who afterwards succeeded Daniel Corrie as the Archdeacon of Calcutta and then as Bishop of Madras in 1850) was to close the series with a statement of the Doctrines of Christianity. The delivery of the lectures commenced at Dr. Duff's house in August 1830, Mr. Hill delivering a preliminary lecture on the Moral Qualifications necessary for investigating Truth. (See Smith, *Life of Alexander Duff* pp. 90 f).

2 The unfriendly *Friend of India* in its obituary notice refers to Hare's "inveterate hostility to the Gospel".

ment again met and resolved that the students at the cost of incurring their displeasure should discontinue the practice of "attending societies at which political[1] and religious discussion were held". There was a temporary calm, and the Missionaries discontinued their lectures; but the leaven supplied by Derozio's teaching continued to act. In the excess of their zeal, however, the impulsive young reformers sometimes went beyond the conclusions of their master, and wanted to make progress by actually "cutting their way", as one of the newspapers of the day quaintly expressed it, "through ham and beef and wading to liberalism through tumblers of beer". Orthodox Hindu society saw nothing in the innovating spirit of the young collegians but an element of danger. No less than twenty-five boys were withdrawn, and about one hundred and sixty were absent or were not allowed to attend college by their suspicious guardians. Evil reports were circulated with regard to Derozio's personal character and morals; and the teacher had to pay the penalty of the excess of his pupils. On April 23, 1831, the Management met again to take decisive measures for removing Derozio, who was considered to be "the root of all evil", as well as punish the more advanced of his pupils who had publicly displayed their hostility to orthodoxy.

RĀM KAMAL SEN (1783-1844)

Although Hare and Wilson showed their disapproval of the step, the chief mover in the matter was, curiously enough, Rāmkamal Sen (1783-1844), grand-father of Keśab Chandra Sen who was one of the most radical reformers of later times. From the humble position of a compositor in the Hindustani Press of Dr. Hunter to which he was appointed in 1804 on eight rupees a month, he became in 1818 a clerk under H. H. Wilson at the Bengal Asiatic Society, then its Indian Secretary and member of its Council. He gradually worked

1 Viz., on the first Reform Bill.

himself up to a very eminent place in the educated society of Calcutta, and was before his death in August 2, 1844 associated with every educational and philanthropic activity in the metroplis.[1] He compiled and published a Bengali-English Dictionary (1825), a Bengali Hitopadeśa (1820)[2] for the Calcutta School Book Society, and had taken an active interest in the spread of European knowledge. But he was also a firm believer in orthodox tradition, and therefore viewed with alarm the consequences of Derozio's teaching, which his hot-headed pupils had carried to conclusions far beyond the intentions of their teacher himself. The requisition calling the meeting of the Committee of Management which was drawn up by Rām Kamal Sen, is an interesting document, which not only exhibits the alarm and distrust of Hindu Society but bears also a hint of the base calumnies which were industriously circulated against Derozio and which Derozio himself indignantly repudiated and challenged his accusers to substantiate.[3]

In the meeting which followed, Wilson and Hare declined to vote on a question which concerned Indian feelings alone ; but the majority condemned Derozio unheard. They admitted that they had neither the power nor the right to enforce the prohibition of private lectures or meetings, but they resolved that it was necessary in the existing state of public feeling to dismiss Derozio as a person not fit to be entrusted with the

1 Besides being a member of the Managing Committee of the Hindu College, he was on the first committee of the Calcutta School Book Society in 1818, a member of the Council of Education in 1839 and also of the Medical Education Committee. He was appointed Dewān of the Indian Establishment of the Calcutta Mint in 1831 Dr. H. H. Wilson who was Assay-master of the Mint, and became a Treasurer of the Bank of Bengal in 1832. See Pyārī Chānd Mitra, *Biographical Sketch of Ram Comul Sen*, Calcutta 1880.

2 See above p.

3 See his letters to Dr. Wilson and the Managing Committee of the Hindu College in Edwards, *op. cit.* pp. 77-89; Peārī Chānd Mitra, *op.cit.* pp. 19-27; Bradley-Birt, *op. cit.* pp. xlii f; *Bengal Obituary*, pp. 104-5.

education of youths. It was also alleged in an intemperate spirit that Derozio was an atheist, and that he had "materially injured their morals" by encouraging immoral practices and by introducing "some strange system, the tendency of which was destructive to their moral character and to the peace of society." Derozio sent in his letter of resignation on April 25, 1831. To H. H. Wilson he wrote a dignified and spirited reply denying the allegations made against him and pointing out the injustice of not allowing him an opportunity of defending himself. At the close of the same year, on Monday, the 26th December,[1] in the midst of strenuous work and youthful enthusiasm, he died of Cholera, watched in his sick-bed through six weary and painful nights and days, by his pupil-friends of the Hindu College.

That Derozio should be called a sceptic or infidel is not surprising, for these names are often given to persons who dare think for themselves; but to make aspersions against Derozio's personal character and to charge him with having inculcated unnatural or immoral principles was a mean retaliation on the part of a narrow orthodoxy, whose citadel his teachings had shaken to its very foundations. A vindication of Derozio is hardly necessary to-day,[2] and if it is

1 And not Saturday, the 23rd December, as Edwards states (p. 167). See *Bengal Obituary*, p. 106, extract from *Samācār Darpaṇ* (Jan 9, 1832) in *Prabāsī*, Aṣāḍh, 1338 B.S.; E.W. Madge, *op. cit*. p. vii. Derozio was buried in the Park Street Cemetery. The *Bengal Obituary, loc. cit.*, remarks that his grave was undistinguished among the crowded tombs of the burial ground, but adds that the compilers of the work "have been at some pains to trace the spot in which his remains were deposited and found that the grave is at the western extremity of the Old (south) Park Street Burial ground. next to the monument of Major Maling, on the south". The grave remained unmarked and unhonoured until a few years ago. A memorial stone has now been placed at the expense of an "admiring fellow-countryman".

2 It is curious that Smith (*Life of Alexander Duff* p. 89), in his zeal to glorify the achievements of Duff, should speak contemptuously of Derozio as "a Eurasian of some genius and much conceit".

necessary it has been already done by his able pupils as well as by his biographer. The earnestness and purity of his teachings as well as of his life are best seen in the way in which they issued in good results such as ever followed in the wake of a sincere striving after truth. Derozio was destined to terminate his short career when others would be likely to commence theirs ; nevertheless, he lived long enough to acquire a reputation which is not likely to perish, as being honourably associated with the intellectual and social advancement of his country.

THE IMPULSE TO FREE THINKING DERIVED FOR DEROZIO

Much has been written on the vagaries of the first students of Western literature in Bengal, who believed that the lights were before them, while all behind was darkness. But it is often forgotten that the new learning bred in its recipients a spirit of enquiry and experiment, a yearning for quick advance and a desire for the enfranchisement of the intellect and the emotion from the thraldom of ages, which in their early stages were bound to lead to revolutionary excess. The impulse to this new life came from Derozio, but it would be unfair to hold him responsible for all that some of his youthful and impulsive pupils did in their impatience of restriction and disregard of tradition. Derozio himself had not attained years of maturity, and his connexion with the College was cut short before his work could be completed. It cannot be said that he did not perceive the danger, but it would be too much to say that he deliberately encouraged any refractory spirit. What he wanted to do was to leaven the minds of his pupils with a new spirit of criticism and enquiry by his own fearless love of truth, and to impress upon their sensitive minds all that was best in the literature and thought of the West. If they became pert, pretentious and self-assertive, it was due more to the one-sidedness of their education which made them look to the present and forget the past.

Indeed, the excess of the reforming zeal of those who

came out of the Hindu College testified to a radical defect in their system of education. Behind the creation of the College there was hardly any clear creative idea. The facile victory of the Anglicists and Macaulay's complacent scheme of Westernisation, as well as the impact of new and alien ideas, had in its first stage blinded the ardent advocates of the new learning, who had neither the inclination nor the capacity for a just appraisement of the virtue or necessity of all that was distinctive in the culture and traditions of the East. The belief was strong that the light of the West was all that was needed to set one on the way to progress ; but it was forgotten that this policy was severing national education from the roots of national life. There was some sympathy with oriental culture, and it was genuine ; but instead of aiming at a reconciliation of the two cultures, the policy frankly and aggressively encouraged Westernisation, of which the Hindu College was set up as the nursery. The Sanskrit College and the Madrassa were suffered to exist as institutions which had outlived their utility, just to cater for people who had hopeless tastes or to promote a certain philosophical or antiquarian purpose. But it was never realised at that period, nor even fully realised to-day, that oriental learning and culture, which was lightly condemned or somehow tolerated, had their roots in national consciousness, and could not be so summarily dismissed. Inveterate prejudice, on the one hand, and blind following of a new fashion, on the other, stood in the way of a correlation of the two cultures ; and a complete break with the past and living in the present came to be regarded as the only cure for intellectual sterility and moral paralysis. No doubt, such a stimulus as was furnished by Western literature was needed at the moment, and it was right that the stimulus was eagerly sought for ; but no attempt was made to adapt the old learning to changing social and political needs, or the new learning to national sentiment and outlook.

The new learning certainly did not send the young

collegians back to old traditions in order to temper them with the new, but in practice it resulted in a weak and hectic adoption of the externals of an alien civilisation. The freaks and excesses of the Reforming Young Bengal became a byeword. If Macaulay wanted the Indian youth to become "English in taste, in opinions, in morals and in intellect, while remaining Indian in blood and colour," the new scheme of training succeeded in a great measure in bringing about this curious transformation. The Young Bengal did not, generally speaking, attain that balance of mind which a liberal education should bestow; and in the onrush of the new ideas they had no time to pause and look back and revise their partial notions. At the same time the moral and intellectual gain was immense. The uncertain vision of the young collegians often led them into strange errors; but they were among the first to protest with courage and independence against the moral and intellectual barrenness of the time. If the new learning gave them a supercilious contempt for everything that was old and an unbounded belief in everything that was new, it also inspired them with a genuine passion for knowledge, a sense of initiative and forward movement, an impatience with false notions and prejudices, a breadth of outlook and a serious spirit of enquiry. If a measure of straitlaced rationalism still cramped and pressed their minds, the stimulus of rational thinking and independent seeking after truth was always there, as well as an yearning for deliverance and advance, which convinced them of the need of fresh inspiration and outlook.

All this must be attributed in no small measure to the influence of Derozio on the young minds of this age. Addressing his pupils he wrote:

Expanding like the petals of young flowers
I watch the gentle opening of your minds,
And the sweet loosening of the spell that binds
Your intellectual energies and powers
That stretch (like young buds in soft summer hours)
Their wings to try their strength. O, how the winds

Of circumstance, and freshening April showers
Of early knowledge, and unnumbered kinds
Of new perceptions shed their influence;
And how you worship truth's omnipotence!
What joyance rains upon me, when I see
Fame in the mirror of futurity,
Weaving the chaplets you have yet to gain,
And then I feel I have not lived in vain.[1]

And indeed he has not lived in vain. The readiness and enthusiasm of his literary taste and vigour of thought, the spell of his compelling personality, the spontaneity of his youth which placed him in close sympathy and affection with his young pupils, his open, generous and affable nature, his fearless love of truth and hatred of all that was mean and unmanly, his ardent love of India evidenced in his conversation as well as by his writings, his social intercourse with his pupils and sincere effort for their welfare—all these traits of his character not only won their hearts and their high respect but also produced a ferment in the intellectual and moral history of Bengal, which in its deep and far-reaching effects has scarcely been paralleled since his time.

THE HINDU COLLEGE AS THE CONTROLLING FORCE OF THE NEW MOVEMENT

The Hindu College in its uncompromising modernity became the controlling force of the new movement; and its record thus possesses a peculiar interest and importance in the early history of Western education in Bengal, its failures and its successes being equally instructive. Distrusted in its early years both by the Missionaries and by the orthodox Hindus as a secular institution which was undermining the foundations of belief, the Hindu College passed through times of trouble; but it succeeded in arousing a remarkable ferment

1 Sonnet to the Students of the Hindu College, published in the *Bengal Annual*, 1831 and reproduced in Edwards *op. cit.*

of new ideas in the Calcutta of the thirties, and helped materially in the upsetting of old ideas. But neither the influence of an institution nor that of an individual, however powerful, would have succeeded in bringing about this result, had not the times been fully prepared for it. The success as well as the failure of the Hindu College and its products was due to the logic of events which had already paved the way for the passing of the old order and the rising of the new. The overthrow of the old political organisation and the break up of the old social fabric had brought into existence such a state of intellectual ruin and moral chaos that a subtle change was coming over the temper and outlook of the younger generation, only to be intensified by the impetus of new ideas. Time-worn customs and irrational prejudices were losing ground; and if with their new training the Young Bengal wanted to see the world from a new angle, this attitude was prompted, not by a mad spirit of iconoclasm, but by their impatience with false notions, absurd practices and conventional restraints, from which they strove to free themselves even at the cost of alienation from deep-rooted national sentiments and traditions. In this way, however blundering the way might have been, mediaeval Bengal was being transformed into modern Bengal.

CHAPTER III

RĀMMOHAN RĀY

As the liberal ideas of the West, flowing through the channel of English education, were stirring the minds of the Young Bengal to a remarkable outburst of intellectual activity and bringing about a radical transformation of their social and religious ideas, there came into action another force which, no less ardent, was not blind in its reforming zeal, but which insisted upon a critical outlook on the past and new aspiration for the future. This spirit was embodied in the life and writings of Rāmmohan Rāy, who was not a product of the Hindu College and never identified himself with the movements of the Young Bengal, but who nevertheless gave an impetus, along with other great men of this epoch, to the religious, social and political thought, which dominates the nineteenth century from 1815 onwards.

HIS LIFE AND CAREER

Rāmmohan Rāy was born[1] in 1774 at Rādhānagar in the district of Hooghly, only seventeen years after the battle of Plassey and one year before the trial and execution of Nandakumār. It was the year in which the Supreme Court was established and Warren Hastings became Governor

1 Of the two dates of birth generally given (namely, 1772 and 1774), there is evidence to show that the date 1774, which is also found on the tombstone in Bristol erected by Rāmmohan's friend Dvārakānāth Ṭhākur, is the most likely. The date 1780 is given in the Biographical Memoir published in the *Asiatic Journal*, November 1833; but it is negligible. See discussions on this point in Brajendra Nath Banerji, *Rāmmohan Rāy* (in Bengali) in *Sāhitya-sebak-caritamālā*, 3rd ed., Calcutta 1944, p. 12; Girija Sankar Raychaudhuri, *Rājā Rāmmohan Rāy, Jīban-cariter Nūtan Khasḍā* (a New Sketch of his Career), Calcutta 1930, pp. 6-7.

General. In the meantime occurred the Great Famine of 1769-70. We should bear in mind the condition of the country from Plassey to the Charter of 1813, and consider the political, social and moral uncertainties, as well as the economic retrogression of the time as a background to Rāmmohan's life, which began in the last quarter of the 18th century. It would help to explain many facts of his life which would otherwise appear incongruous. The country was passing through vast and vital changes, from what may be called the mediaeval to the modern age, and Rāmmohan Rāy was one of the important heralds of the new spirit; but, as in the life of the people, so also in the life of the individual, traits will be found in which the old tradition still lingered.

The difficulty, however, of a proper appraisal of Rāmmohan's life and career lies in the fact that a large accumulation of unfounded legends and exaggerated accounts appears to have overlaid the picture through the excessive zeal and credulity of his friends and followers. But mere anecdote and adulation is not history. Some of these were made current in the last century, with a semblance of authoritativeness, by his three standard biographies[1]; but these works were written at a time when many facts of his life remained undiscovered. As it often happens with the lives of great

1 Mary Carpenter, *Last Days in England of Rajah Rammohun Roy*, London 1866; Nagendra Nath Chatterji, *Mahātmā Rājā Rāmmohan Rāyer Jīban-carit*, 1st ed, Calcutta 1881; Sophia Dobson Collet, *Life and Letters of Raja Rammohun Roy*, London 1900. These works were written mostly from the Unitarian Christian and Brahmo points of view.—In this connexion mention should be made of an Autographical Sketch, in the form of a letter, supposed to have been written by Rāmmohan himself. It was published by Sanford Arnot, at one time Rāmmohan's secretary, in the *Athenaeum* of October 3, 1833, about a week after Rāmmohan's death. It was reproduced by Mary Carpenter, but its authenticity was questioned by S.D. Collet (*op. cit.*) and F. Max Müller (*Biographical Essays*, London 1884).

men, abundant fancies envelop scanty facts[1]; but in the case of Rāmmohan the current biographies also suffer from the excessive stress they put on the religious or 'spiritual' aspect of his career. They conceive him as a great religious personality, assign to him a long and arduous course of apprenticeship in theological studies, and speak of his early travels and prolonged sojourns within and outside India, in centres of Hindu, Islamic and Buddhist learning! They uphold him as a person of great moral integrity and repeat the story that he was unjustly deprived of his patrimonial inheritance and maliciously persecuted by his orthodox relatives by means of a series of prolonged lawsuits, because he was "an apostate and infidel"[2] !

If we confine ourselves to hard facts revealed by documentary evidence which has been recently unearthed, we find that these amiable assertions are open to serious doubt. We are not concerned here with details[3], but it is now made clear that Rāmmohan, belonging as he did to a respectable

1 Some of the legends are said to have had Rāmmohan's own approval!—It is curious that, apart from lavish encomiums, when the facts recorded in these lives are gathered together and properly arranged, they are found exceedingly meagre and unsatisfactory, some of them being based obviously on mere hearsay and late tradition. And yet these biographers set in vogue the use of superlatives, to which people are still prone without much thinking!

2 S.D. Collet (*op. cit.* p. 15) also relates the picturesque anecdote that the sight of his elder brother Jagamohan's widow becoming *Satī* made him take the vow to uproot this atrocious custom. But the indisputable fact that Rāmmohan was absent from home at the time of Jagamohan's death (March-April 1812) and for two years more at far away Rangpur, spoils the story. Collet received this "anecdote" (as she says) from Rajnarayan Bose, who had heard it from his father Nandakisore Bose. It is related also in Nagendra Nath Chatterji's Bengali Life.

3 For which see Brajendra Nath Banerji in *Modern Review*, May 1930; in *Calcutta Review*, August 1931, pp. 156-79; December 1933, pp. 237-56; January 1934, pp. 60-72; March 1934, pp. 365-71, where all the new information is fully given and discussed.

and prosperous Brahman family of landed gentry, spent his younger days (till 1803) at his ancestral home at Rādhānagar, or in the house at Lāṅgulpāḍā village nearby, looking after the property of his father and his own, and paying flying visits to Calcutta chiefly on account of his lucrative money-lending business carried on there with needy European officials. His ancestors, in the latter half of the 18th century, served the Muhammedan rulers of Murshidabad and acquired property in some capacity or other. His father, Rāmkānta Rāy, described by his enthusiastic biographers[1], as an "upright and estimable man", "specially noted for his quiet and retiring disposition", was no better nor worse than most worldly wise men of the latter half of the 18th century. Rāmkānta's second wife,[2] Tāriṇī Devī, was Rāmmohan's mother, who had another son named Jagamohan born earlier. Rāmmohan's father belonged to a Baiṣṇava and his mother to a Śākta family ; but those[3] who imagine in this union a "synthesis" of two religious beliefs stretch the point too far ; for the matter was of little practical importance. Rāmmohan probably had strong Tāntrik beliefs ; and his vehement antipathy to Baiṣṇavism is obvious in his Disputation with the Gosvāmī ; but these attitudes developed at a later period

1 S.D. Collect, *op. cit.*, p. 2 and Sibanath Sastri in his *History of the Brahmo Samaj*, vol. 1, Calcutta 1911 (2nd ed. 1919).

2 The first wife Subhadrā died childless, but the third wife Rāmmaṇi had a son named Rāmlocan, who died in December-January 1809-10.

3 In his *Ram Mohun Roy the Universal Man* (printed in Amal Home's Rammohun Centenary Booklet, No. 1, Calcutta 1933) Brajendranath Seal says in this connexion: "Siva and Visnu watched over his cradle as his ancestral tutelary deities on the maternal and paternal sides"! Apart from the obvious confusion made here between Śaiva and Śākta cults, it may be pointed out that Rāmmohan's leanings towards the Śākta cult of a Tāntrik type came probably, not from his mother or maternal relations, but from his association with Hariharānanda much later.

of his career. Like his father Rāmmohan married three times[1] in accordance with the customary Hindu rites.

With his environment and family-tradition we find Rāmmohan Rāy in his early years closely "occupied with the management of his father's and his own estates, with lending money to European civilians and holding jobs in various places under the men so obliged by him, with acquiring properties and carrying through subtle *benāmi* transactions, with buying Company's papers and dealing with them; in short, with making money and doing everything that went to make a successful and influential man of the world of his age."[2] We know that men in those days, both European and Indian, did not have over-scrupulous ideas in the acquisition of wealth; the middle-class family in which Rāmmohan was born, as well as he himself, was no exception to this widespread attitude towards worldly affairs. Rāmmohan in his later life, no doubt, made good use of the money he had

1 The names of the wives are not known. The first wife had died (according to William Adam) before Rāmmohan was nine years old; and he was married successively twice. The third wife who survived him and died in 1858, was childless; but by his second wife, who died in 1824, he had two sons, Rādhāprasād (born 1800) and Ramāprasād (born 1802). After 1803 Rāmmohan left home, but his wives never accompanied him nor lived with him at Rangpur and Calcutta; for it was not the custom to take one's wife to one's place of employment. It was venial in those days for rich men in towns to keep concubines. But in the eyes of Hindu society Rāmmohan Rāy's offence was that his mistress was a Muhammedan, to whom, however, he is said to have been united in the Śaiva form of marriage. This wife of Śaiva marriage is said to have lived at Tamfat about four miles from Rangpur, and came with him to Calcutta in 1814. The son born (about 1816-17) of this union, Rājārām, was made known as his adopted son. He had real affection for this boy and took him to England. See *Prabāsī* B.S. 1336, pp. 219-229 and pp. 843-48; also 1342, pp. 541-49; *Saṃbād-patre Sekālar Kathā*, ii, 3rd ed., pp. 763-774. See below on Rāmmohan's defence of the Śaiva form of marriage.

2 Brajendra Nath Banerji in *Calcutta Review*, December 1933, p. 256.

earned in the cause of social and religious reform ; but he was never averse to luxurious living and enjoying the good things of life.[1]

These preoccupations from 1791 to 1803 could not have permitted sufficient interval for prolonged sojourns and elaborate theological education such as his biographers fondly imagine. He could not have spent at a stretch ten years at Benares in the study of Sanskrit and Hindu Śāstras, an indefinite period at Patna for mastering Arabic and Muslim theology, and two or three years in Tibet for a knowledge of Buddhist beliefs,[2] unless we presume that he began precociously at the age of six[3] and finished by the time his father

1 We have contemporary references to his luxurious style of living from the time he settled down to live in Calcutta, and to the festive parties he threw, in which figured the Muslim dancing girl Niki, who is called the Catalani of the East by one of his English visitors (Fanny Parkes, *Wanderings of a Pilgrim...in the East*, London 1850, i, pp. 29-30). He adopted the costume of a Muhammedan grandee (Collet, *op. cit.* p. 91) and some Muhammedan habits in his private life. He was never an anchorite nor an ascetic. He was hale and hearty and possessed a strong physique and handsome appearance, as well as a great deal of shrewdness, commonsense and courtesy. Sir Edward Hyde East, writing to J. Harrington on May 18, 1816, says that the Hindu dislike of Rāmmohan was particularly due (apart from the aggressiveness of his monotheistic belief) to his associating with Muhammedans, to his "being continually surrounded by them" and to the suspicion of his partaking meals with them! In one of his tracts Rāmmohan defends the adopting of Muhammedan dress.

2 Rāmmohan Rāy wrote on some aspects of Christian, Hindu and Muhammedan religion, but with the exception of stray and vague references to Buddhist view, it is somewhat strange that he does not speak about Buddhism (at least in its Tibetan aspects), which he is (p. 15) said to have studied in Tibet. Still G.S. Leonard in his *History of the Brahma Samaj* (Calcutta 1879) would have it that Rāmmohan "had to master a Turanian language" and "explore the difficult mazes of Kagyar and the Magyar (!), the large and small collections of Buddha teachers". It is needless to comment on such rhetorical rapture.

3 We do not know much of Rāmmohan Rāy's movements during 1792-95; but it is too short a period for such elaborate programme.

removed to Lāṅgulpāḍā in 1791. There is no conceivable reason why the worldly-minded Rāmkānta should have sent his second son at a tender age to distant places for such systematic religious education, while his other sons acquired training and experience at home befitting their station in life.

About 1791 Rāmkānta left his ancestral Rādhānagar house with his three wives and sons and settled at Lāṅgulpāḍā. On December 1, 1796 he divided his property among his three sons, Rāmmohan receiving half share of his paternal house, some rent-free Brahmottara land and a house at Jorasanko in Calcutta. Up to this time the father and the son appear to have been on good terms; and there could not have occurred any break consequent upon theological discussion such as William Adam describes in his reminiscences[1] recorded as late as 1879. But from 1799 to 1800 we find the Rāy family fallen into great financial adversity, while Rāmmohan was flourishing in prosperity by his astuteness and enterprise. It appears, however, that he did nothing to relieve the distress of his relatives, with whom he does not appear to have been on good terms at this time; nor did he take any step to get his father[2] and elder brother out of

There is mention of an intended visit to Patna, Benares and other places (for what purpose it is not known) in 1800; but his stay abroad could not have been of long duration, for we find him in Calcutta in 1801. It is surmised that his visit to Benares was occasioned by his desire to meet the Civilian Officer, Andrew Ramsay, to whom he had lent some money (Rs. 7,500), either for repayment or for some employment instead.

1 Quoted by S.D. Collet (*op. cit.* p. 8).

2 We find that in 1802 while his father could not get release for a small due of Rs. 500, Rāmmohan was lending Rs. 5000 to Thomas Woodforde! This is a contrast to Debendranāth Ṭhākur's noble attitude towards paternal debts.—This might have been one reason why there was estrangement between Rāmmohan and his high-minded mother, who afterwards left home for Puri in 1820 and died there on April 21, 1822.

civil jail into which they had been thrown for unpaid debts. He was probably not present at the time of Rāmkānta's death at Burdwan in May-June 1803; for Rāmmohan, on his own statement, was continuously absent from home from 1803 to 1814. The funeral ceremonies, however, were performed separately by Rāmmohan at Calcutta in the normal Hindu manner. We have mentioned that Rāmmohan did receive his share of paternal property in 1796, and no discrimination was made on any ground whatever. If he did not *inherit* any property, it was because Rāmkānta at the time of his death had no personal property left for his sons to inherit. With regard to the prolonged and complicated law-suits by which Rāmmohan is alleged to have been harassed, the records of these suits, now unearthed, make it clear that they arose from purely personal, family and pecuniary causes, and that the religious opinions held by Rāmmohan were never the inspiring motive nor even a remote ground. The beautiful story, therefore, of "the sacrifice of his patrimonial rights tendered at the shrine of truth and conscience"[1] vanishes! As his later career in Calcutta (from 1815) proves, Rāmmohan was certainly a man of great and forceful personality; but it is misdirected zeal which would forget his limitations (which were also the limitations of the time) and invest him with the false glory of a scholastic and saintly life, when his true greatness lay in other directions.

From 1803 to 1814 began Rāmmohan's close association with two European Civilians of the East India Company's service. Towards the end of 1802 Rāmmohan appears to have lent money to Thomas Woodforde of the Civil Service, who within a few months (on March 7, 1803) gave him an employment and took him to Dacca-Jalalpur (Faridpur). After this Rāmmohan became associated with another Civilian, John Digby, from the middle of 1805 to the middle

1 So Sanford Arnot writes! Either Rāmmohan's friends misunderstood him or he himself misled them into thinking that he was an unjustly persecuted man.

of 1814, and followed him to Ramgarh, Jessore, Bhagalpur and Rangpur, not only as an employee but also as a friend.[1] Some of his biographers want to make out that Rāmmohan earned a great deal as a Government servant, but the actual period of his service did not extend to more than two years[2] and the posts did not go higher than those of a Sheristadar or a temporary Dewan. Digby had a high opinion of Rāmmohan's ability and wanted to make him a permanent Dewan at Rangpur. But his reputation was not above reproach ; and the President of the Board of Revenue declined to make the appointment permanent on the ground that he had "heard unfavourable mention of his (Rāmmohan's) conduct as a Sheristadar at Ramgarh." Rāmmohan, however, probably continued in the private employment of Digby as his personal Munshi. From the income of his private property Rāmmohan was already a well-to-do man ; but when he finally left Rangpur and came to settle down at Calcutta in 1814 he is said to have amassed a large fortune.[3] His moral integrity, like that of Bacon, was naturally questioned.[4] We have no means to

1 See Brajendra Nath Banerji in *Calcutta Review*, 1934, pp. 60-62.

2 To be exact, one year and nine months, according to Brajendra Nath Banerji. See his article on Rammohun Roy in the service of the East India Company in *Modern Review*, June 1929.

3 K. S. Macdonald in his *Rajah Rammohun Roy, the Bengali Reformer* (Calcutta 1879) says: "During the ten years he was a Dewan he is said to have saved so much money as to enable him to purchase an estate worth Rs. 1,000 a month, a matter which is not supposed to add to his fame." Apart from the fact that Rāmmohan was never a Dewan for ten years (though he was known popularly as Digby's Dewan), Christian missionaries were not favourably disposed towards Rāmmohan; and Rev. Macdonald in 1879 was Principal of the Free Church Institution at Calcutta. It is no wonder that he should wind up his remarks with the comment, p. 5: "Unlike Solomon, he seems to have made the acquisition and retention of wealth an object of life, not second even to that of wisdom!"

4 Kissory Chand Mittra in his article on Rammohun Roy in the *Calcutta Review*, December 1845, refers to this, but Rāmmohan's income

decide the point, but if Rāmmohan did keep his hands clean, he must have been a splendid exception, for the system of small pay and large responsibility in those days made official corruption the rule and official integrity the exception.

HIS RELATION TO JOHN DIGBY, AND KNOWLEDGE OF ENGLISH

But Rāmmohan's friendly association with Digby made him realise the importance of improving his knowledge of the English language. His duties were probably not heavy and left enough leisure at his disposal. Digby, who held him in great respect, informs us[1]: "At the age of twenty-two[2] he commenced the study of the English language which, not pursuing with application, he, five years afterwards, when I became acquainted with him (i.e. in 1801) could merely speak it well enough to be understood upon the most common topics of discourse, but could not write it with any degree of correctness." Digby adds that during the five years he was at Rangpur, Rāmmohan "acquired so correct a knowledge of the English language as to be enabled to write and speak it with considerable accuracy." Writing in 1845, only twelve years after his death[3], Kissory Chand Mittra does not seem to hold a high opinion of Rāmmohan's ability to write good English, and only admits that "his acquaintance with the English language was......highly respectable and no more—though *for his time* it might be pronounced remarkable".

is given as "ten thousand a year." G. S. Leonard *op. cit.* pp. 21-22 disputes the charge by presuming that what Rāmmohan took was not illegal gratification but 'legal perquisites'; but he forgets that Rāmmohan's regular official service covered too short a period to enable the 'legal perquisites' to mount up to a decent fortune.

1 In his preface to the London reprint of Rāmmohan's *Translation of an Abridgement of the Vedant* etc. (London 1817).

2 That is, in 1796.

3 In *Calcutta Review*, cited above, p. 362. The English style found in Rāmmohan's writings may be elegant but, as Collet remarks, is prone to circumlocution and hardly easy or attractive to read.

Mittra adds: "We would have it distinctly understood that his English writings do not furnish a legitimate criterion of his knowledge of English. They were, to a certain extent, the production of his European friends, though the thoughts and sentiments embodied in them owed their paternity to him alone......In writing his religious and political pamphlets, in drawing up papers or even letters of importance, he had constant assistance of an intelligent and highly educated friend. He did not send a line to the press without submitting it to his revision".[1] With regard to his Bengali writings also there is a suspicion[2] that Rāmmohan possibly utilised the help of his own Pandits as well as that of Pandits like Gaur Mohan Bidyālaṅkār, just in the same way as some other rich men of those days did. The obituary notice[3] which appeared in the *Asiatic Journal* of November 1833, after stating that Rāmmohan "wrote English much better than he spoke it" and referring to the constant literary assistance he received from friends and amenuensis, sums up the position thus: "How much of his reputation, as an elegant writer, may therefore be attributable to others, both here and in India, can only be conjectured. As he was exceedingly ambitious of literary fame, he took care, both in Europe and in India, to obtain the best assistance he could get, both European and native. His works, therefore, do not furnish an absolute criterion of his literary talents, although these are, no doubt, considerable."

1 Leonard (*op. cit.* p. 17) confirms this by stating more moderately: "It is stated on good authority that Rāmmohun had all along recourse to Mr. Adam and Mr. Gordon, his friends, for the correction of his English writings." Sanford Arnot, who was his secretary for some time, also did this work.

2 See *Śanibārer Chithi*, Māgh 1340 B.S., pp. 425-26 (by the present writer).

3 This anonymously published notice was written by Sanford Arnot.

HIS KNOWLEDGE OF ARABIC AND PERSIAN

We do not know at what time and to what extent Rāmmohan learnt Persian and Arabic. Persian was at that time the language of law-courts and business transactions and therefore constituted a requisite qualification of a successful man of the world; but Arabic was studied chiefly as the language of Muslim theology, although the two studies often went together.[1] The date of Rāmmohan's first tract *Tuhfat-ul-Muwahiddin* is usually given as 1803 or 1804, and the place of publication as Murshidabad.[2] In his *Appeal to the Christian Public* (1820) he refers apparently to this work as "a treatise in Arabic and Persian" directed against the system of idolatry, but the preface alone appears to have been written in Arabic.[3] There cannot be much doubt, therefore, that

1 We know from a letter of Digby's that Rāmmohan was his personal Persian Munshi at Jessore (1807-8). In his recommendation to the Board of Revenue (January 31, 1810) Digby speaks highly of his knowledge of Persian. The *Periodical Account* of 1816 of the Serampore Mission mentions Rāmmohan as a respectable Sanskrit scholar, "so well versed in Persian that he is called Mouluvee Rama Mohuna Raya."

2 Possibly Rāmmohan was at Murshidabad at this date, as the presence of Andrew Ramsay and Thomas Woodforde there in 1804 would indicate.—Brajendra Nath Banerji surmises that Rāmmohan's visits to Calcutta brought him in contact with the Munshis of the Supreme Court and the Fort William College, and enabled him to improve his knowledge of Persian and possibly of Arabic.—In later life he appears to have acquired some knowledge of Hebrew, which is cognate to Arabic, as well as Greek, presumably for the purpose of reading the originals of the Christian scriptures; but, as Sanford Arnot says, his knowledge was of a limited character.

3 The original work was translated into English, under the title of "A Gift to Deists" by Maulvi Obaidullah El Obaide, Superintendent of Dacca Madrassa and published with a preface by Rajnarayan Basu on behalf of the Ādi Brāhmo Samāj in 1884. An English revised version is also given in the Panini office edition of the English works (Allahabad, 1906), pp. 941-57, under the title "A Present to the Believers in one God." At the end of this work Rāmmohan states that he has left further discussion of the subject to another work of his, entitled *Manazarat-ul-*

by 1804 Rāmmohan had considerable knowledge of Persian and Arabic ; and it is highly probable that he imbibed from these studies an intolerant monotheistic attitude which, to some extent, explains his later aggressive attacks of polytheistic beliefs.

HIS STUDY OF SANSKRIT

During Rāmmohan's stay at Rangpur (1809-14) an opportunity occurred of studying Sanskrit and the Hindu Śāstras. At the age of about fourteen (in 1788)[1] he had met Nandakumār Bidyālaṅkār (1762-1832), senior to him by about twelve years ; and an intimacy seems to have grown up between them. This learned Pandit of the village Pālpāḍā (near Sukhsāgar) subsequently renounced the world and became a peripatetic Kaula Tāntrik Abadhūta under the name of Hariharānanda-nātha Tīrtha-svamī.[2] He came to Rāmmohan at Rangpur (at least in 1812, if not earlier) and followed him to Calcutta in 1814. He used to attend the meetings of Rāmmohan's Ātmīya-Sabhā or Friendly Society,

Adiyan, but no copy of this work has yet been discovered, and it is doubtful if it was ever written.

1 See Brajendra Nath Banerji, *Hariharānanda-nāth Tīrthasvāmī* in Sāhitya-sebak-caritamālā, Calcutta 1944 (3rd ed.).

2 In the colophon to his commentary on the *Mahānirvāṇa Tantra* his name is given as Kulāvadhūta Hariharānanda-nātha Bhāratī. Avalon in his edition of this text informs us that the manuscript of the commentary he used was "almost entirely in the Raja's handwriting". He adds that "it has been suggested that the Mahānirvāṇa was a fabrication in whole or in part of Hariharānanda." That it is a comparatively modern work admits of little doubt; see Chintaharan Chakravarti's introduction (p. xxi-xxii) to the Bengal Asiatic Society's *Catalogue of Tantra Manuscripts*, vol. viii (Calcutta 1940). The *Kulārṇava Tantra* is found printed in Rāmmohan's collected works, but it was published by Hariharānanda during his stay in Calcutta in 1816-17. Hariharānanda died at Benaras on January 17, 1832, at the age of 70. It is noteworthy that Rāmmohan made use of these two apocryphal Tantra works in establishing some of his peculiar views against those of his opponents, who twitted him on this account. See below.

held generally at Rāmmohan's Maniktala garden-house, where he joined in the discussions on the question of the abolition of Satī. It is probable that Harihārananda initiated Rāmmohan into Tāntrik belief. This appears not only from Rāmmohan's vigorous defence of the Śaiva (Tāntrik) form of marriage (with quotations from the *Mahānirvāṇa Tantra*), but also from Debendranāth Ṭhākur's testimony in his Autobiography[1] that he made a disciple of Harihārananda, named Sukhānanda, who informed him that Rāmmohan Rāy, like Sukhānanda himself, was a "Tāntrik Brāhma Avadhūta" and disciple of the same spiritual guide.

We find that up to 1803, when Rāmmohan performed the funeral obsequies of his father in the orthodox manner, there could be no question of his antipathy to orthodox belief and custom. But it was about this time or a little later that the first indication of his interest in religious enquiry is found in his *Tuhfat* (1803-4), in which he takes up a monotheistic position. We do not know, however, if it was merely an intellectual exercise, induced perhaps by his early acquaintance with Muslim monotheism, or the result of deeper personal conviction. At least for ten years more (till 1814) we find no trace of any religious awakening or intellectual activity in this direction. In the meantime, however, his intimate association with Harihārananda at Rangpur presumably stimulated his interest in religious questions[2]; and

1 *Debendranāth Ṭhākurer Sva-racita Jīban-carit*, published by Priyanath Sastri, 1898, p. 143.

2 Jogendra Chandra Ghosh in the introduction to his edition of the English Works of Rāmmohan Rāy, vol. i (Calcutta 1885, p. v) repeats Leonard's mention (quoted by Collet, *op. cit.*, p. 12) of Gaurīkānta Bhaṭṭāchārya of Rangpur writing a tract called Jñāna-candrikā (or Jñānāñjan) against Rāmmohan's views. He adds that it was revised and printed at Calcutta in 1245 B.S. (1938 A.D.) and that from it "we learn that while at Rungpore Rammohun wrote Persian tracts and translated parts of the Vedanta." The real name of the work was Jñānañjan; it was first published in 1821. See *Saṃbadpatre Sekāler Kathā*, ii, pp. 170, 738. According to Śibanath Sastri, Gaurīkānta was

when about the middle of 1814 he emerged from what Collet calls provincial obscurity and settled down in the metropolis, we find him fully prepared to embark upon a prolonged and vigorous career polemical activity.

RĀMMOHAN REMOVES TO CALCUTTA

The immediate cause of Rāmmohan's removing to Calcutta was the retirement[1] of Digby on long leave from Rangpur on July 20, 1814. In the meantime Rāmmohan had earned enough competence to settle down[2] comfortably, even luxuriously, at Calcutta. While his wealth brought its incidental advantages of position and influence, his tall and aristocratic appearance, dignity of bearing, innate courtesy and grace of manner were additional assets. He sold his Jorasanko house, but acquired two houses, one at Chaurangi and another at Maniktala,[3] where he received and entertained his friends and

a Sheristadar of the local court (which seems to be correct), but Leonard says that he was Dewan of the Judge's Court at Rangpur.—We know nothing of the Persian tracts, but the latter part of this statement that at Rangpur he translated parts of the Vedānta is admissible; for his Vedānta works were published immediately after he removed to Calcutta.

1 Digby returned in November 1819 and was posted at Burdwan from Sept. 1, 1821 to July 19, 1824. It is not impossible that his official influence was utilised by Rāmmohan in the suit instituted against him by the Burdwan Rāj. See Girija Sankar Raychaudhuri, *op. cit.*, pp. 36-40.

2 Although Rāmmohan had left Rangpur, he could not settle down permanently at Calcutta till 1816, as he was called away on some secret diplomatic mission on behalf of Government to Bhutan and Rangpur. This Bhutan trip might have given rise to the legend of his visit to Tibet.

3 The Maniktala house was situated on the Upper Circular Road, and is now occupied by the Deputy Commissioner of Police, North District, Calcutta. Its extensive grounds originally extended up to Sukea Street on the south, and covered 15 bighas (roughly 3 acres) of land. He gave a share of the Lāṅgulpāḍā house to his nephew (sister's son) Guruprasād Mukherji (Dec. 1814) and built a house for himself at Raghunāthpur, where his family continued to reside. He had another house at Amherst Street, known as his Simla house, where lived his two sons Rādhāprasād and Ramāprasād.

distinguished visitors. In this way, with an alert and eager mind, he came for the first time, in closer contact with a larger world, in which prevailed in those days three divergent types of culture, Hindu, Muslim and Christian. The doubt, first raised in his mind by his acquaintance with Muslim theology (as we find it in his *Tuhfat*), was now developed through the influence of English education and study of Hindu scripture ; and he began, at the mature age of forty, a career of polemic and pamphleteering, which fully occupied him for more than fifteen years up to 1830.

HIS BOOKS AND PAMPHLETS

The great literary energy of Rāmmohan is indicated by the large number of his published books and pamphlets, both original and translations, written in English and in Bengali, which come up to more than seventy.[1] Some of the works were originally written in Bengali, but English versions of them were also published so that they might reach both Indians and Europeans. The authorship of some of them, however, was veiled under an assumed name or anonymity. Barring some tracts on political, social and legal questions of the day, most of them are of the nature of vigorous polemics ; but in spite of the provocative language of

1 Fairly good bibliography is given in Brajendra Nath Banerji, *Rāmmohan Rāy* in Sāhitya-sebak-caritamālā cited above, pp. 80-111. Editions of Bengali works are : (i) that published by Rajnarayan Basu and Ananda Chandra Bedantavagisa from the Adi Brahmo Samaj, Calcutta, Śaka 1795 (A.D. 1873). This is reprinted by the Panini Office, Allahabad, B.S. 1312 (A.D. 1905), and (ii) the more complete and critically edited collection, published by Brajendra Nath Banerji and Sajanikanta Das from the Bangiya Sahitya Parisad in 7 parts (in one volume). Of his English works we have (i) the Edition by Jogendra Chandra Ghosh in two volumes, Calcutta 1885, 1887, (ii) Edition published by the Panini Office, Allahabad 1906 and (iii) the Centenary Edition, Calcutta 1934, which contains some additional matter.—For purpose of propaganda most of Rāmmohan's tracts were published at his own expense and distributed free.

opponents, they are written in good temper and with considerable amount of courtesy. It would be enough for our purpose if we select the most important of his works, confining ourselves chiefly to those written in Bengali.

Within a few months after his removal to Calcutta Rāmmohan published his *Vedānta-grantha* (1815), in which he gives his own interpretation in Bengali of the Sanskrit *Vedānta-sūtra*, and which became the starting point of his controversies with the champions of current forms of Hinduism. There cannot be much doubt that the study of Vedānta had declined in Bengal[1] ; and to Rāmmohan belongs the credit of reviving it by writing for the first time a running commentary in Bengali on the original Sūtras. This was followed immediately, probably in the same year, by a short pamphlet of 22 pages, entitled *Vedānta-sāra*,[2] which gave a summary of the central doctine of the Vedānta as Rāmmohan understood it. Then he published in quick succession five Upaniṣads in the following order:

> Kena in June and Īśa in July 1816 with Bengali translation (English version also in 1816), and
>
> Kaṭha in August 1817, Māṇḍūkya in October 1817 and Muṇḍaka in 1819, all with Bengali translation (English version of the first and the last in 1819).

It will be thus seen that Rāmmohan's main preoccupation from 1815 to 1819 was to demonstrate by means of these old Hindu scriptures that the contemplation of Brahma (or the Supreme Spirit), devoid of form and attribute, is alone recognised, and that the current idolatrous practices are thereby not authorised. Rāmmohan had an eminently practical mind; and it is doubtful if he accepts all the implications of Śaṃ-

1 His opponent Mṛtyuñjay Bidyālaṅkār admits this in 1817 when he says that his object in writing his own *Vedānta-chandrikā* was: এতদ্দেশে বেদান্তশাস্ত্রের অপ্রাচুর্য্যপ্রযুক্ত.

2 In English: *Translation of an Abridgement of the Vedanta, or the Resolution of all the Veds*, Calcutta 1816.

kara's extreme idealistic monism, which postulates the sole reality of an attributeless and unconditioned Brahma and permits only an illusive and provisional reality to the world and the individual. The very word *upāsanā*, employed by Rāmmohan in connexion with Brahma-realisation in the sense, as he says, of 'propitiation and worship,' implies a dualistic conception of an individual soul's longing for the divine objective. As a matter of fact, writing in 1829, shortly after he established his Brahma-Sabhā, Rāmmohan in his *Universal Religion* describes the worship as "a contemplation of the attributes of the Supreme Being"; for his Brahma, though mentioned as "imperceptible and indefinable," is a very real Brahma who is "the Author and Governor of the Universe" and therefore not wholly devoid of attributes. What Rāmmohan actually does, for his particular purpose, is that he superimposes Western (or rather Semetic) monotheism on the strictly monistic Vedānta of Śaṃkara. Rāmmohan, no doubt, emphasised that idolatry was not essential to Hinduism; but the depraved idolatrous practices of the time perhaps obscured his vision to the fact that in Hinduism idolatry is not mere idol-worship, nor is it gross paganism, but it is admittedly a symbol (Pratīka), as well as a stage for higher spiritual realisation.[1]

In all this Rāmmohan did not claim, nor was he establishing, anything new; he was merely interpreting old texts in a new way. With regard to his opposition to idolatry we find him already anticipated by Rām Rām Basu who, prompted by

1 Rāmmohan admitted this later in his controversy with Mṛtyuñjay Bidyālaṅkār. See below. It is noteworthy that Debendranāth Ṭhākur does not, strictly speaking, accept Rammohan's position, but he declares that the Vedāntic doctrine is an obstacle to Brahmoism!—It is curious that although idolatry was the *bête noire* of Rāmmohan as well as of the later Brāhmo Samāj, yet Rāmmohan did not restrain Īśvar Chandra Nyāyaratna of his Samāj from proclaiming Rāmachandra of ancient Ayodhyā as an Avatāra, nor was he averse to the setting up of a statue of Rāmchandra ; and Akṣay Kumār Dutta supported it (see the latter's *Upāsak Saṃpradāy*, pt. ii, introd.).

his association with Christian missionaries, wrote in 1800 a pamphlet against the current practice. Rām Rām also makes his obeisance to 'Para Brahma' in the Preface to his *Lipimālā* (1802). He became connected with the Fort William College from 1801; and we know from Digby that Rāmmohan, during his visits to Calcutta at this time, had contacts with this College.

HIS CONTROVERSIES

Whatever that might be, these publications of Rāmmohan brought forth learned and animated replies from the orthodox defenders of Hinduism, and we find him plunged with great zeal into a series of controversy. He understood very well the value of propaganda; and the means he adopted consisted not only of free publication of books and pamphlets and carrying on learned disputations, but also of establishing associations of friends and supporters and later on of starting periodicals. Soon after he published his *Vedānta-grantha* in 1815 he established at his Maniktala house an Ātmīya-Sabhā or Friendly Society, which in 1828 developed into the Brahma-Sabhā with the object of encouraging religious fellowship.[1] Hariharānanda used to attend the meetings of the Ātmīya Sabhā (at least up to 1819); and his youngest brother Rāmchandra Bidyāvāgīś (1785-1845), also a learned Pandit, whom he had introduced to Rāmmohan, joined the association whole-heartedly.[2] The *Tattvabodhinī Patrikā* (Baiśākh 1, 1767), which became an organ of the Brāhma Samāj under

1 See Brajendra Nath Banerji in *Modern Review*, April 1935, pp. 415-19.

2 For Rāmchandra Bidyāvāgīś see Brajendra Nath Banerji's memoir in Sāhitya-sebak-caritamālā no. 9 (3rd ed. 1944). Rāmmohan appears to have opened a Ṭol for him (or is it Rāmmohan's Vedānt College?) where he used to teach. He became Professor of Smṛti at Calcutta Sanskrit College on May 14, 1827. He was also connected with the School Book Society, for which he compiled a Bengali Dictionary (*Baṅgabhāṣābhidhāna*) in 1820. After Rāmmohan left India, the movement was kept alive by Rāmchandra for 12 years till Debendranāth Ṭhākur reorganised it into a full-fledged Brāhma Samāj.

Debendranāth Ṭhākur, informs us that in all his Śāstric disputations Rāmmohan was assisted by Rāmchandra, who is described as his principal associate (*pradhān sahayogī*). We hear also of Śivaprasād Śarman, who is called Rāmmohan's Paṇḍit by Collet. People have extolled Rāmmohan's profound Śāstric scholarship, but they forget that behind it was the learning of these Paṇḍits. With their ungrudging assistance Rāmmohan was now from 1817 to 1820 engaged in a series of disputations on Hinduism.

HIS POLEMICS

There is not much intrinsic interest today in these outworn polemics, and all the works are now accessible; it would be enough if we mention them briefly here. They are in their order:

(i) Disputation with Utsabānanda Vidyāvāgīś, in 1816-17. Utsabānanda was a Vaiṣṇava Paṇḍit and devotee, who used to send his questions, written in Sanskrit, to the Ātmīya-Sabhā, and Rāmmohan gave his replies in the same language.[1] Here for the first time we find Rāmmohan's opposition to the Vaiṣṇava faith. Rāmmohan is said to have converted Utsabānanda to his own views; we find him preaching in the Sabhā on August 20, 1828.

(ii) Disputation with the Bhaṭṭāchārya (ভট্টাচার্য্যের সহিত বিচার, pp. 1-67) in May 1817. Mṛtyuñjay Bidyālāṅkār of the Fort William Collage had made adverse observations in his *Vedānta-candrikā*[2] on Rāmmohan's Vedāntic works ; it was

1 Two of these questions and replies are printed for the first time in the Sāhitya Pariṣad edition of Rāmmohan's works.

2 This is reprinted in *Mṛtyuñjay-granthābalī* (Ranjan Press, Calcutta 1939) and in the Sāhitya Pariṣad ed., cited above. The English version was entitled *An Apology for the Present System of Hindoo Worship* (Calcutta 1817). In the 3rd Report of the School Book Society (Appendix p. 39) we find a mention of this Vedānta Chandrikā, "in defence of Hindoo idolatry against the observations of Rammohun Roy" by Mṛtyuñjay.

published both in Bengali and English. Rāmmohan's reply was also both in Bengali and English.[1] In them he wants to shew the untenability of the worship of an incarnate deity (Sākāra or Saguṇa Upāsanā); but he admits that such a mode of worship is permissible at a lower stage or in ignorance.

(iii) Disputation with Śaṅkar Śāstrī of Madras in 1817. The immediate occasion of this controversy was a letter, dated December 26, 1817, from a Madras Paṇḍit published in the *Madras Courier*, which attacked an article of Rāmmohan's published in the *Calcutta Gazette*, and referred to his *Abridgement of the Vedānt*. Rāmmohan's reply in English was entitled *A Defence of Hindu Theism, in reply to the attack of an Advocate for Idolatry at Madras* (Calcutta 1817). He regrets that the controversy is carried on in a foreign language and not in Sanskrit ; "the irregularity" (as he calls it) makes him suspect that the writer was an Englishman. In his *Defence* Rāmmohan shews the absurdity of some of the idolatrous practices and the degrading character of legends attached to Hindu deities.

(iv) Disputation with the Gosvāmī (গোস্বামীর সহিত বিচার), pp. 1-50 in June, 1818. Who this Gosvāmī was is not known, but from the proceedings of the School Book Society it is surmised that he was probably one Rāmgopāl Śarman. In this tract Rāmmohan wants to discredit the reliability of the *Bhāgavata* as a scripture, and makes a vigorous onslaught on the tenets and practices of Bengal Vaiṣṇavism.

(v) Disputation with an unknown Kavitākāra (কবিতাকারের সহিত বিচার, pp. 23+49) in 1820. In this tract Rāmmohan replies to the charges that he did not understand nor properly interpret the real sense of the Veda.

(vi) Disputation with Subrahmaṇya Śāstrī, a Paṇḍit of

1 Rāmmohan's English version is entitled *A Second Defence of the Monotheistical System of the Veds*, Calcutta 1817. The first *Defence* refers to his English reply to Śaṅkar Śāstrī, mentioned below, which was apparently published first.

the Sadar Dewani Adalat (সুব্রহ্মণ্য শাস্ত্রীর সহিত বিচার, pp. 1-16)[1] in 1820. Rāmmohan's reply was in Sanskrit (printed in both Bengali and Devanāgarī characters), in Hindi and in Bengali. The short English version of four pages was published under the title *An Apology for the Pursuit of Final Beatitude, independently of Brahmanical Observances* (Baptist Mission Press, Calcutta 1820). In this work Rāmmohan wants to shew that a man is entitled to Brahma-vidyā and final beatitude, even though he has not studied the Vedas and observed the prescribed duties of his caste (*varṇa*) and stage of life (*āśrama*).

RĀMMOHAN ON THE CUSTOM OF SATĪ

About this time Rāmmohan became greatly interested in the agitation against the cruel custom of burning widows alive on the funeral pyre of their husbands (Satī or Sahamaraṇ). The history of this movement is well known, and need not be told here in detail. The practice is not referred to in the earlier Hindu Law-books, but it became permitted as an option to widows in later works. Towards the end of the Hindu rule it was definitely enjoined as a religious duty, and hundreds of women fell victim to cruel death in the name of religion. From the early days of the British rule both officials and missionaries appealed to Government to stop the atrocious custom, but no decisive step could be taken because Government was afraid of offending the religious, but really superstitious, sensibilities of a large class of people. The regulations of 1812, 1815 and 1817, no doubt, prohibited burning of widows who were of tender age or pregnant or had infant children, and made punishable the use of drugs to benumb the senses of unwilling victims ; but the measures

1 Rāmmohan is said to have met Subrahmaṇya Śāstrī at the house of Bihārilāl Chaube on Pouṣ 17, 1741 Śaka (ব্রাহ্মসমাজের ইতিবৃত্ত, কলিকাতা ইণ্ডিয়ান মিরার যন্ত্রে মুদ্রিত, শক ১৭৯৩ = 1871 A.D.) at a session of the Ātmīya Sabhā (Siva Nath Sastri, *op. cit.*, i, p. 27).

appear to have borne little fruit. When the orthodox Hindus protested against these regulations, there were progressive people who submitted a counter-petition, in which they declared that "all these instances are murders, according to every Shastra as well as the common sense of all nations." The Supreme Court, however, refused to tolerate the practice within the precincts of Calcutta ;[1] and Mṛtyuñjay Bidyālaṅkār, an older contemporary and opponent of Rāmmohan, on a reference from the Supreme Court, recorded his opinion as early as 1817 that this custom was not approved by the Hindu Śāstras[2]. Rāmmohan's propaganda also took the same line of Śāstric argument.

Rāmmohan wrote three tracts in Bengali (and in English) on the subject[3] ; but what further active steps he took for the cause we do not know definitely. On the contrary, he appears to have advised caution when definite measures were being considered for immediate abolition of the Satī. When at last Lord William Bentinck, whose zeal for reform was keen, passed the famous Regulation xvii of December 4, 1829, which declared the Satī illegal and punishable by courts, a congratulatory *Address* was presented to him. It is taken for granted that the Address was composed by Rāmmohan. It may have been so, but we have no definite evidence. Bentinck's measure evoked loud protest from the orthodox Hindus, and an attempt was made to have it repealed by the Privy Council. The counter-petition, to the House of Commons, to the memorial of the advocates of the Satī (1830) is

1 The Dutch, the Danish and the French administration prohibited it respectively in Chinsura, Serampore and Chandannagar.

2 Rāmmohan himself refers to the opinion of Mṛtyuñjay.

3 The three tracts in English, which are really versions of his Bengali Tracts, namely, *A Conference between an Advocate for and an Opponent of the practice of burning Widows alive*, Calcutta 1818; *A Second Conference* etc. (dedicated to Lady Hastings), Calcutta 1820, and *An Abstract of the Arguments regarding the burning of Widows considered as a religious rite*, Calcutta 1830, were all anonymously published.

also said to have been composed by Rāmmohan. Ultimately the Home authorities upheld the new regulation. Bentinck's noble efforts were ably supplemented by the first Lord Hardinge, and the inhuman practice was at last definitely abolished.

Undoubtedly Rāmmohan took an important part in the movement, but to attribute all the credit to him is obviously unfair to the progressive Hindu community, as well as to Government authorities, without whose active efforts the measure for abolition could not have been passed against the determined opposition of the Hindu Dharma-sabhā and other orthodox bodies. Of Rāmmohan's three Bengali tracts on the subject the first is entitled সহমরণ বিষয় প্রবর্ত্তক ও নিবর্ত্তকের সম্বাদ, published in November 1818 (pp. 1-22). It is written, as its title implies, in the form of a dialogue between a supporter of the custom and his opponent. The second tract (November 1819) has also the same title সহমরণ বিষয় প্রবর্ত্তক ও নিবর্ত্তকের দ্বিতীয় সম্বাদ (pp. 1-33). Its immediate occasion was Kāśīnāth Tarkavāgīśa's advocacy of the custom ;[1] but, of course, these advocates were champions of a lost cause. The third tract was simply entitled সহমরণ বিষয় (pp. 1-11), and published in 1829. His main arguments in his English *Abstract*, as summarised by Collet, can be grouped under three heads, namely, that co-cremation was (i) not obligatory but at most optional, (ii) not the most commendable but the least virtuous act, a widow could perform and (iii) must be a voluntary ascending of the funeral pile and entering into the flames. It will be seen that Rāmmohan did not condemn the practice outright on general humanitarian grounds, but following Śāstric argument, he would allow it under certain circumstances.

HIS CONCERN WITH CHRISTIANITY

We now come to another phase of Rāmmohan's activity, which during 1820-23 was concerned with certain aspects of

1 In a tract entitled বিধায়ক নিষেধকের সম্বাদ.

Christianity. We have seen that Rāmmohan's belief in the unity of God and opposition to idolatrous forms of worship first attracted his attention to Muhammedan religion, but he could not accept its doctrines in their entirety. His study of the Christian religion was also prompted by a similar spirit of enquiry. He formed a high opinion of its moral teachings, and accordingly published in 1820 (with translations into Sanskrit and Bengali) his *Precepts of Jesus, the Guide to Peace and Happiness*, "extracted from the Books of the New Testament, ascribed to the four Evangelists". This publication led to a controversy with Christian missionaries, especially those of Serampore, who objected in their periodical, the *Friend of India*, that Rāmmohan did not understand Christianity and omitted its real substance. Rāmmohan in reply wrote and published in the same year (1820) *An Appeal to the Christian Public in defence of the Precepts of Jesus by a Friend to Truth.* His *Second Appeal* was issued under his own name in 1821, and his third and *Final Appeal* was published anonymously in 1823. He repudiates the charge of being a heathen and claims to be "a believer in one true and living God". He describes himself by implication as one "labouring in the promulgation of Christianity"! Meanwhile in reply to some attacks made in the *Samāchār Darpaṇ* of July 18, 1821 Rāmmohan published in September 1821 three numbers of a periodical called *Brahmunical Magazine*: *The Missionary and the Brahman* or ব্রাহ্মণসেবধি ব্রাহ্মণ ও মিসনরি সম্বাদ (English and Bengali printed on opposite pages), in which, under the assumed name of his Paṇḍit, Śivaprasād Śarman he made what he calls "a vindication of Hindoo religion against the attacks of Christian Missionaries" and a defence of his own Vedāntic system. The fourth and probably the last number of the Magazine was issued (only in English) in 1823. Rāmmohan complains that the Christian Missions in India depart from the promise of the British authorities not to interfere with the religion of their subjects, and take an undue advantage of the fact that Christianity is the religion of the

rulers. We need not enter here into the details of the controversy,[1] but we may briefly indicate that Rāmmohan's disagreement with orthodox Christians consisted chiefly in the position that while he had faith in the high ethical value of Christ's precepts, his rational and unitarian mind refused to believe in the divinity of Christ and in the dogmas of Trinity and Atonement taught by the Christian Church. His campaign against Christian Trinitarianism, which implied "incarnation' worship, was thus launched on the same lines as that against the popular form of Hindu idolatry. The Unitarian Christians, of course, warmly welcomed Rāmmohan's main position, and some of them became his close friends. It must be said, however, that Rāmmohan had no personal animus against Christian missionaries as such. He befriended Alexander Duff and encouraged his missionary efforts.[2] He was partial to the Presbyterians and regularly attended service at St. Andrew's Church. It seems, therefore, that the controversy was more or less academic, and it was carried on with the dialectic skill which characterises Rāmmohan's similar writings.

ATTACK ON HIS PRIVATE LIFE AND PERSONAL CHARACTER

From 1822 we find Rāmmohan's private life and personal character subjected to insidious attacks by his Hindu opponents. We have already referred to his luxurious style of living, of associating with Muhammedans and partaking of meals with them as well as with Europeans, of throwing festive parties in which dancing girls figured and of his questionable connection with a Muhammedan woman. In the matter of total abstinence from intoxicating drinks his opinion and practice differed from those of most other religious thinkers. In the *Samāchār-darpaṇ* of April 6, 1822

1 For which see S.D. Collet, *op. cit.* ch. iv.

2 This is in contrast to Debendranāth Ṭhākur's later activity directed vehemently after Christian missionaries.

were published in Bengali চারি প্রশ্ন (*Four Questions*), written in an allusive style by one who called himself ধর্ম্মসংস্থাপনাকাঙ্ক্ষী (One desirous of establishing Religion). The fourth Question alluded to Rāmmohan's conduct and character thus: অনেক বিশিষ্ট-সন্তান যৌবন ধন প্রভুত্ব অবিবেকতা প্রযুক্ত কুসংসর্গগ্রস্ত হইয়া লোক-লজ্জা ধর্ম্মভয় পরিত্যাগ করিয়া বৃথা কেশচ্ছেদন সুরাপান যবন্যাদিগমনে প্রবৃত্ত হইয়াছেন। The charge alleges that certain well known persons, fallen into bad company because of youth, wealth, power and thoughtlessness, throw off fear of religion and of public opinion, cut their tuft of hair, drink wine and consort with Muhammedan women. This evoked from Rāmmohan in May 1822 an anonymous reply in Bengali (pp. 1-26) called চারি প্রশ্নের উত্তর (Answer to Four Questions). An extensive rejoinder to this, entitled পাষণ্ড পীড়ন (or 'A Torment to the Irreligious'[1]) came out from the Samāchār Chandrikā Press in 1823. It repeats the charges against the author of the চারি প্রশ্নের উত্তর with great vehemence: অভোজ্যভোজন অগম্যাগমন ইত্যাদির প্রমাণান্বেষণে যত্ন করিয়াছেন ও অদ্যাপিও করিতেছেন (p. 8), and applies, apart from Śāstric arguments, abusive epithets such as নগরান্তবাসী (which by pun means also চণ্ডাল), মাংসাশী, সুরাচার্য্য, পঞ্চমকারসাধক, বিতর্ককারক, যবনবেশধারক, কুলার্ণবমহানির্ব্বাণ-তন্ত্রমাত্রদর্শী, বামাচারী, যবনান্নভোক্তা, যবনমাত্রে তদ্গতচিত্ত, যবনীগমন-কারী। The attack is veiled, but the taste displayed is deplorable. The name of the author does not appear, but the title-page says it was "Prepared and published with the assistance of a Pandit by a Person wishing to defend and disseminate Religious principles." This Paṇḍit appears to have been Kāśīnāth Tarkapañchānan of the Fort William College, who wrote the work under the direction of Umānanda (or Nandalāl) Ṭhākur, son of Harimohan Ṭhākur, of Pathuriaghata. To this Rāmmohan again replied anonymously in December,

1 It is reprinted in the Sahitya Parished ed. of Rāmmohan's works, pt. vi, which also contains the চারি প্রশ্ন and চারিপ্রশ্নের উত্তর.

1823 by his পথ্যপ্রদান (or 'Medicine for the Sick') offered, as the title page says ironically, "by one who laments his inability to perform all righteousness" (সম্যগনুষ্ঠানাক্ষম তজ্জন্য-মনস্তাপবিশিষ্ট). The medicine, of course, is compounded from the Śāstras. Apart from doctrinal questions which are discussed, Rāmmohan does not directly deny the personal allegations, but he makes a vigorous attempt to justify them. Against the attack of his detractors Rāmmohan contends that drinking of wine is not against the spirit of the scriptures, because the Tantras (especially the *Kulārṇava* and *Mahānirvāṇa*) approve of consecrated wine, which is necessary for the revealing of the meaning of the Mantra (*mantrārtha-spūraṇārthāya*) and for the deep knowledge of Brahma (*brahma-jñāna-sthirāya ca*)[1]. Regarding intercourse with a Yavanī he justifies it by a reference again to Tantra which prescribes Śaiva form of marriage, and states: তন্ত্রোক্ত শৈব বিবাহের দ্বারা বিবাহিতা যে স্ত্রী সে বৈদিক বিবাহের স্ত্রীর ন্যায় অবশ্য গম্যা হয়। বৈদিক বিবাহের স্ত্রী জন্ম হইবার মাত্রেই পত্নী হইয়া সঙ্গে স্থিতি করে এমত নহে। বরঞ্চ দেখিতেছি যাহার সহিত কোন সম্বন্ধ কন্য ছিল না সেই স্ত্রী যদি ব্রহ্মার কথিত মন্ত্রবলে শরীরের অর্দ্ধাঙ্গভাগিনী হয়, তবে মহাদেবের প্রোক্ত মন্ত্রের দ্বারা গৃহীতা যে স্ত্রী সে পত্নীরূপে গ্রাহ্য কেন না হয়?...শৈব বিবাহে বয়স ও জাতি ইহার বিচার নাই, কেবল সপিণ্ডা না হয় এবং সভর্তৃকা না হয়। তাহাকে শিবের আজ্ঞাবলে শক্তিরূপে গ্রহণ করিবেক। (চারিপ্রশ্নের উত্তর)।

1 মন্ত্রার্থের স্ফূর্ত্তি হইবার উদ্দেশে ও ব্রহ্মজ্ঞানের স্থিরতার উদ্দেশে মদ্যপান করিবেক। লোলুপ হইয়া করিলে নরকে যায়। (চারিপ্রশ্নের উত্তর)। বিহিত মদ্যপান ও বৈধ হিংসা সল্লোকদের মধ্যে অনেকের ব্যবহার্য্য, অতএব তত্তৎপক্ষে সর্ব্বথা সদাচার ও সদ্ব্যবহারে গণিত হইয়াছে। (পথ্যপ্রদান)। If কায়স্থের সহিত মদ্যপান বিষয়ক বিচার (1826) be a tract of Rāmmohan's, this position is also maintained there (it is printed in the ed. of Rajnarayan Basu and Ananda Chandra Bedantabagish). This work was published under the assumed name of Rāmchandra Dās.

Again, শৈবধর্ম্মে গৃহীত স্ত্রীকে পরস্ত্রী কহিয়াছেন, অতএব জিজ্ঞাসি যে বৈদিক বিবাহে বিবাহিত স্ত্রী সঙ্গে পাপাভাবে কি প্রমাণ ?...শাস্ত্রবোধে স্মৃতি ও তন্ত্র উভয়েই তুল্যরূপে মান্য হইয়াছেন, একের মান্যতা অন্যের অমান্যতা হইবার কোন যুক্তি ও প্রমাণ নাই। (পথ্যপ্রদান)

If these are, as they must be, Rāmmohan's personal views, they are meant not only to justify his own conduct and character, but they also indicate that he did not want to be considered a renegade from Hinduism from unworthy motives, and therby to lose "caste"[1]. This anxiety to retain caste is shown in some of his writings by his maintaining that he was not only a true Hindu but also a true Brāhmaṇ. William Adam in one of his letters to Dr. Tuckerman[2] speaks of Rāmmohan's outward compliance with the rules of caste and secret disregard of them. This is confirmed by curious story recorded by Adam[3] that one day at noontime Rāmmohan, returning from a visit to Bishop Middleton, was willing to take refreshment at Adam's house provided the servants who brought it were sent away ; for, says Adam, "if they had seen him eat under my roof they would have bruited abroad that he had lost caste." The sacred Brahmanical thread found on his body after his death also indicates that he never wanted to give up the sign of his caste. Rāmmohan was, no doubt, a shrewd and cautious man ; but why he did not or could not break through the unreasonable restrictions imposed by caste is not known to a certainty.

HIS JOURNALISTIC ACTIVITY

About this time Rāmmohan issued, as we have noted above, the English-Bengali periodical *Brahmunical Magazine*

1 It has been suggested that Rāmmohan's advocacy of Śaiva marriage was prompted by his desire to bring about a fusion of various castes by facilitating inter-marriage among them. But this is really a gratuitous reading of a high motive where probably there was none.

2 Collet, *op. cit.*, pp. 82-83.

3 Collet, *op. cit.*, p. 45.

or *Brāhmaṇ-sebadhi*, but it was meant for the particular purpose of combating the views of the missionaries ; and it probably ceased with the publication of the fourth number in 1823. On December 4, 1821 was published the weekly *Saṃbād-kaumudī*,[1] the second Bengali journal conducted by a Bengali, under the editorship of Tārāchāṁd Datta and Bhabānīcharaṇ Bandyopādhyāy. We do not know how far it is correct to say that this weekly was "set up" by Rāmmohan or that he was its *de facto* editor, but it is probable that he was closely connected with it and contributed to its pages. It supported the agitation regarding the abolition of Satī ; and this seems to have been the reason why Bhabānīcharaṇ severed connexion with the paper after its thirteenth issue and started a new weekly, called *Samāchār-chandrikā*, on March 5, 1822, as the organ of orthodox society. The only periodical which appears to have been directly conducted by Rāmmohan is the *Mirat-ul-Akhbar*, "Mirror of News", the first Persian weekly, published in Calcutta on April 12, 1822. The rigorous Press Ordinance of March 14, 1823, however, sealed its fate ; and it stopped publication not many months after the Ordinance came into force as a protest against this official interference with the freedom of the press. Collet says that the paper lived in all for about six months. We also know that for about three months Rāmmohan became one of the proprietors of the *Bengal Herald*,[2] which was first published on May 9, 1829. This is the total

1 On the *Saṃbād-kaumudī*, see Brajendranath Banerji, *Bāṃglā Sāmayik Patra*, Calcutta, New ed. 1354 B.S., pp.17-20; also see his article on Rāmmohun Roy as a Journalist in *Modern Review*, 1931, pp. 408-11. This paper continued its existence through many ups and downs, and survived Rāmmohan by several years. The object of the *Saṃbād-kaumudī*, as well as of *Mirat-ul-Akhbar*, was not so much political as educational, like that of most periodicals of the time.

2 It was published in four languages (English, Bengali, Persian and Nagri) and edited by R. Montgomery Martin, a Calcutta surgeon. Its Bengali version was called *Baṅga-dūt*, and was edited by Nīlratna Hāldār.

extent of Rāmmohan's well-intentioned, but short-lived, journalistic ventures. He was perhaps too busy at the time to devote himself earnestly to journalism, although he was certainly interested in it as an instrument of propaganda. The Press Ordinance, however, and its unjust application met with universal disapprobation ; and Rāmmoman could not but join in the agitation against it. A Memorial of protest was submitted to the Supreme Court on March 31, 1823. It is generally held that the Memorial, which is extolled as "the Areopagitica of Indian History," was composed by Rāmmohan,[1] who was one of the six signatories.[2] On the Supreme Court rejecting it, an Appeal to the King in Council[3] was preferred through the Board of Control in 1825. Rāmmohan was one of the eminent persons who signed the appeal which, however, was rejected by the Privy Council in 1825. All this shows that Rāmmohan was keenly interested in this movement and took a leading part in it ; but it is not clear how far his activity in this direction deserves the facile tribute of Montgomery Martin that "to no individual is the Indian Press under greater obligation than to the lamented Rāmmohun Roy."

1 Collet (*op. cit.*, p. 67) says that this memorial was attributed to by its opponents to an English author, but was "really, as generally acknowledged later, the work of Rammohun". Sanford Arnot claimed the authorship of this Memorial, as well as of the writings of Rāmmohan published under the pseudonyms of "Ram Doss" and "Shivu-Prusad Surma". Arnot was a journalist who worked in connexion with the *Calcutta Journal* and was known to Rāmmohan, who employed him as his secretary in England. See *Saṃbadpatre Sekāler Kathā*, i, pp. 468-71.

2 The other signatories were Chandrakumār Ṭhākur, Dvarkānāth Ṭhākur, Prasanna Kumār Ṭhākur, Harachandra Ghosh and Gaurīcharaṇ Banerji.

3 Full texts of both the Memorial and the Appeal will be found in the Panini Office ed., pp. 437-43 and 445-67. Rāmmohan's authorship of the Appeal is mentioned by R. Rickards' *India* (London 1829), but the source of its information is not known.

HIS INTEREST IN THE SPREAD OF ENGLISH EDUCATION

We have already referred to Rāmmohan's connexion with the inauguration of the Hindu College (1817) and his interest in the spread of modern education.[1] The fact remains unshaken that the College came into existence, not through what Rāmmohan did or wanted to do, but through the whole-hearted effort of David Hare, seconded by that of Sir Edward Hyde East and of some influential citizens of Calcutta. Among those who at a later stage of its history were responsible for the management of the institution, prominent mention must be made of Rāmkamal Sen and Rādhākānta Deb.[2] Rāmmohan never appears to have taken any interest in the College; on the contrary, we are told that he did not like the outburst of enthusiasm which led to the thoughtless excesses of the young collegians. As early as 1816-17, however, Rāmmohan had established an English school of his own at Śuḍipāḍā for the free instruction of Hindu boys. He was able to purchase a piece of land near Cornwallis Square and construct a building for his school, where it was formally opened in 1822 under the name of Anglo-Hindu School[3]. About this time Rāmmohan's larger interest in modern education manifests itself in his letter[4] addressed to Lord Amherst on December 11, 1823. This was, however, written at a time when the experiment on English education was already being justified by the success of the Hindu College and its numerous tributary schools. The immediate occasion of the Letter was the

1 See above, p. 465.

2 Rādhākānta remained a Director of the College from 1819 to 1850. His father Gopīmohan Deb was one of its first Directors. Rāmkamal, who was a member of its Managing Committee, became its Governor in 1823.

3 Rāmmohan's son Ramāprasād Rāy, as well as Debendranāth Ṭhākur, were at one time students of this school.

4 The letter will be found printed in the edition of Rāmmohan's English works, as well as in Sir Charles Trevelyan's *Education of the People of India*.

resolution of Government to establish (on the suggestion of H. H. Wilson) a Sanskrit College at Calcutta. On this issue Rāmmohan raised his voice in protest and remarked strongly: "This seminary can only be expected to load the minds of youth with grammatical niceties or metaphysical distinctions of little or no practical use to the possessor or to society. The pupils will there acquire what was known two thousand years ago with the addition of vain and empty subtleties[1] since produced by speculative men." He maintains that the Sanskrit language by reason of its great difficulties had been for ages a lamentable check to the diffusion of knowledge ; but if it must be studied for the sake of the knowledge, now obsolete, that ancient Sanskrit writings contained, the object might be promoted by grants to existing institutions where it was already being taught. Instead of an unmixed Sanskrit system of education which would, like the system of the schoolmen before the time of Bacon, only perpetuate ignorance, Rāmmohan advocates "a more liberal and enlightened system of instruction. embracing Mathematics, Natural Philosophy, Chemistry, Anatomy, with other useful sciences". Rāmmohan's letter, however, was unceremoniously rejected with the remark that it "is not considered to call for any answer on the part of Government". In spite of such unfavourable reaction on the authorities, this noble and forceful document is indeed highly remarkable. It was written at a time when Government, in spite of the success of the Hindu College and English schools, still adhered obstinately to their narrow Orientalist policy in education ; and it expressed in clear terms the views of the educated Indians who did not agree with this policy. It is, however, not correct to say that Rāmmohan "took a prominent part in the great educational controversy between the Orientalists and the

1 And yet Rāmmohan's own writings show that he himself relished in these niceties and subtleties of Sanskrit texts!

Anglicists[1]". As a matter of fact, the controversy had not yet started ; it came to a head twelve years later in 1835.

It is necessary to note in this connexion some remarkable features of this letter. In the first place, Rāmmohan's condemnation of Sanskrit learning is too sweeping, like Macaulay's, to be entirely true. He wants to emphasise the urgent necessity of modern education ; but for that reason to brush aside Sanskrit education indicates not a broad but a one-sided view of the whole question. Either Rāmmohan did not understand or deliberately ignored the cultural aspect of Sanskrit learning ; and like Macaulay he did not perhaps realise that the study of Sanskrit had a special and peculiar claim for recognition inasmuch as it furnishes to us the key to the understanding of our own culture and tradition. In the second place, Rāmmohan does not speak of teaching English but advocates instruction in the useful sciences of the West. He is not interested in the teaching of English literature as an instrument of culture, or in the humanistic aspect of modern education. His own writings, which are concerned chiefly with religious and philosophical polemic of the scholastic type, do not reveal any appreciation of either English or Sanskrit literature, nor do they show any genuine literary taste. And yet it was through the appreciation of English literature and absorption of its humanistic content that modern culture became widespread in Bengal in the nineteenth century. In the third place, Rāmmohan indulges in a severe criticism of the Vedānta, which appears strange in view of his defence of its doctrines in so many works, and of his founding a "Vedant College" himself in 1826. It seems, however, that what he opposed was not Sanskrit education in general, but the current system of Sanskrit teaching by Paṇḍits ; while his Vedānta College was meant chiefly as a seminary to propagate his own views of the Vedānta system.

1 Ramananda Chatterjee in his introduction to the Panini Office ed. (2nd ed. 1906).

On the strength mainly of this letter to Lord Amherst Rāmmohan has been hailed by enthusiastic admirers as "the prophet and pioneer" of English education[1]; but the claim can hardly be justified when we take into account the earlier, more prolonged and munificent efforts of such other contemporary "pioneers" in the field as David Hare, Gopīmohan Ṭhākur, Jaykṛshṇa Siṃha, Rāmkamal Sen, Rādhākānta Deb and their colleagues.

THE ĀTMĪYA-SABHĀ AND BRAHMA-SABHĀ

We have already referred to the Ātmīya-Sabhā which Rāmmohan established in 1815 mainly for religious discussion, accompanied by the reading and interpretation of the Veda and monotheistic songs on Brahma. It was kept going till 1819, but the congregation was dwindling. In the meantime Rāmmohan's opposition to Trinitarian Christianity brought him in close sympathy with the Unitarian Christians in Calcutta and abroad. With the help of William Adam, who was originally a Baptist missionary but now a Unitarian,[2] Rāmmohan organised (with Christian service) the Unitarian Committee in September 1821. Rāmmohan's views[3] so closely

1 See Brajendranath Banerji, Rammohan Roy as an Educational Pioneer in *JBORS*, June 1930 p. 171; but this over-estimate is admitted to be incorrect by Banerji himself later in his *Saṃbad-patre Sekāler Kathā*, ii. p. 711.

2 Hence he was tauntingly called the second fallen Adam by his detractors!

3 Rāmmohan explains his position with reference to Unitarianism in a tract entitled *Answer of a Hindoo to the question—why do you frequent a Unitarian place of worship*? His answer to the question why he frequented a Unitarian place of worship is stated thus: "Because the Unitarians believe, profess and inculcate the doctrine of the divine unity, a doctrine which I find firmly maintained both by the Christian scriptures and by our most ancient writings commonly called the Vedas." But his Unitarianism was different from that of the Channings, the Priestleys and the Parkers.—This publication bore the signature of Chandraśekhar Deb, a disciple and friend of Rāmmohan, but it was probably a composition of Rāmmohan's. It is printed in the

coincided that already in 1819 we find his friend and spiritual guide Hariharānanda describing the Ātmīya Sabhā as "the Brahmyu or Unitarian Hindoo Community." We are told that about this time Rāmmohan also delighted to call himself "Hindu Unitarian." But, as Collet observes, the Unitarian exotic did not thrive. At the instance of some of his friends and followers, who suggested an independent place of Brahma-worship, Rāmmohan formed the Brahma-Sabhā, which commenced to function from August 20, 1828. It used to hold its session on every Saturday evening between 7 and 9. Tārāchāṁd Chakravartī, one of the earliest students of the Hindu College, became its Secretary. While Utsabānanda read from the Upaniṣads, Rāmchandra Bidyāvāgīś explained other relevant Vedic texts. The simple service was concluded with songs in praise of Brahma with appropriate musical accompaniment, in which Muhammedan musicians were not excluded. But we are informed that the chanting of the Vedas was done in a separate room so that "the Veda may not be desecrated by being in the same apartment with the *profanum vulgus* of hearers" (presumably of Śūdras!).[2] Until a suitable

Panini ed., pp. 199-203. Chandraśekhar Deb (born 1810) was an old student of the Hindu College at the time of Derozio. He became a Deputy Collector and wrote a commentary on the Revenue Laws.

1 Tārāchāṁd (born 1806) worked for some time on the *Calcutta Journal* of James Silk Buckingham. He assisted H. H. Wilson in translating the Sanskrit Purāṇas into English. He then became a teacher at Pataldanga school of David Hare. He served also as a Munsif and then as Deputy Registrar of the Sadar Dewani Adalat (1837). He was President of the Society for the Acquisition of General Knowledge (1838) ; and his party, consisting of some of the students of the Hindu College and nicknamed the 'Chakravarty faction', were pioneers of political agitation under the guidance of George Thompson M. P. who came to India in Dec. 1842. He compiled a Bengali-English Dictionary which was published in 1827. From about 1839 he was engaged in export and import business. He was a contributor to the Bengal Spectator from April 1842 till Nov. 1843. He became Dewan of Burdwan Raj from 1846 till 1851. Died probably in 1855.

2 This is borne out by what Debendranāth Thākur writes in his

building for the Sabhā could be erected the meetings were held in a rented house belonging to Kamal-locan (otherwise Feringi Kamal) Bose at Jorasanko on the Chitpur Road. The Sabhā was removed to a newly constructed building and formally opened in January 1830. Its first Āchārya or preceptor was Rāmchandra Bidyāvāgīś of whom we have spoken above.

We do not know exactly when the Brahma-Sabhā came to be called Brāhma Samaj. In the account[1] given in the *Christian Observer* of March 1833 it was still known as "Brumha Shubha"; but it is somewhat strange that on the printed copy (dated August 20, 1828) of Rāmchandra's first discourse the name Brāhma Samāj (perhaps Rāmchandra's own nomenclature) appears on the title-page. The point, however, is immaterial; for Rāmmohan's organisation, by whatever name it was called, was established on a broad and catholic basis and was never meant to be the Brāhma Samāj of a particular religious community. The very trust-deed of the Sabhā laid down clearly that it was to be "a place of Public Meeting of all sorts and descriptions of people without distinction" for "the worship and adoration of the Eternal, Unsearchable and Immutable Being, who is Author and Preserver of the Universe"; but the Supreme Being is to be worshipped by no name, designation or title peculiarly used by any man or set of men whatsoever. No picture, image or statue will be admitted in the place of worship; nor should there be any slaughter of animals as sacrifice; no eating or drinking would

autobiography. "আমি এক বুধবারে সেই সমাজ দেখিতে যাই। আমি গিয়া দেখি যে সূর্য্য অস্ত হইবার পূর্ব্বে সমাজের পার্শ্বগৃহে একজন দ্রাবিড়ী ব্রাহ্মণ উপনিষৎ পাঠ করিতেছেন; সেখানে কেবল রামচন্দ্র বিদ্যাবাগীশ, ঈশ্বরচন্দ্র ন্যায়রত্ন এবং আর দুই তিন জন ব্রাহ্মণ উপবেশন করিয়া তাহা শ্রবণ করিতেছেন; শূদ্রদের সেখানে যাইবার অধিকার নাই।" This happened in 1842 nine years after Rāmmohan's death, but it carried on the tradition from his time.

1 See Brajendranath Banerji in *Modern Review*, April 1935, p. 416-17.

be allowed; and no religion must be reviled or slightingly mentioned. There will be preaching, discourse, prayer and hymn calculated to promote the contemplation of Brahma as well as to encourage morality, piety and benevolence, and strengthen "the bonds of union between men of all religious persuasions and creeds". This was Rāmmohan's truly exalted idea of the worship of one God of all religions and all men. It is worth noting that in accordance with this idea Rāmmohan himself never claimed that he was the founder of a particular religious faith or sect. In his *Defence of Hindoo Theism* as early as 1817 he declares: "In none of my writings, nor in any verbal discussion, have I ever pretended to reform or discover the doctrine of the unity of God, nor have I ever assumed the title of reformer or discoverer." Strictly speaking, the Brāhma Samāj of later times, even if remotely connected, did not actually originate with Rāmmohan; but it was organised, on somewhat different lines, twelve years later by Debendranāth Ṭhākur, son of Dvarkānāth Ṭhākur (1794-1846), who was one of Rāmmohan's great friends and a trustee of his Brahma-Sabhā.

HIS INTEREST IN SOCIAL AND POLITICAL PROBLEMS

In the multiplicity of these persuits Rāmmohan could still find leisure to write on some social and political problems of the day. We have referred to his writings in connexion with the agitation on the Satī. But like the suppression of Thugee, the abolition of Satī was not really a measure of social reform but the suppression of a criminal act, which could be (as it was) done best by legislation. The real social problem began after its abolition; for to prevent the murder of widows was only to create the problem, namely, of the amelioration of their condition. The difficulty is not overlooked by the prohibitory Regulation itself which, after stating that the practice was "revolting to the feelings of human nature," proceeds to say that "it is nowhere enjoined by the religion of the Hindoos as an imperative duty ; on the contrary, a life

of purity and retirement on the part of the widow is more especially and preferably inculcated." Besides this life of continence recommended, the remarriage of the widow could also be suggested as a solution. It could also be proposed that the widow should be given such training and education as would enable her to lead an honourable, useful and independent life. It was also necessary to change the Hindu law of inheritance in such a way as to make the life of the destitute widow less precarious. All these social problems inevitably arose and occupied the attention of thinkers and reformers of later times, and continued even up to the present day. Rāmmohan shows himself aware of some of these problems. The degrading position of women, no doubt, engaged the sympathy of his noble mind, and he was anxious that women should have their proper legal rights. To this end he wrote his *Brief Remarks regarding modern encroachment on the ancient rights of females according to the Hindoo Law of Inheritance.*[1] In this work he deals incidentally with other relevant questions regarding the position of women under the law and in actual practice ; but we are not sure that he devoted serious thought to them. It is somewhat strange that a much-married man himself, who had three wives living, Rāmmohan should speak against polygamy, Kulinism and the practical selling of girls in marriage. And in spite of his enthusiasm for woman's cause, we have no indication in his works of any constructive views on widow-remarriage,[2] child-marriage or women's education.[3]

1 Unitarian Press, Calcutta 1822. The Unitarian Press was set up by Rāmmohan himself at Dharmatala.

2 The following passage of his *Pathya-pradān* (Sahitya Parisad ed. p. 140) would show that he was not in favour of remarriage of widows: বিধবা বিবাহ তাবৎ সম্প্রদায়ে অব্যবহার্য্য হইয়াছে, সুতরাং সদ্ব্যবহার কহাইতে পারে না।

3 We must bear in mind that woman's education was taken up as early as 1819 by the Female Juvenile Society (of the Baptist missionaries) which developed into the Ladies' Society for Native Female Education

With great legal acumen Rāmmohan wrote also a tract[1] on the father's power of alienation of ancestral property according to the law of Bengal,—a power which has since been amply recognised by law-courts in India. He was also interested in political and economic questions, but his writings on them are not extensive. We have already referred to the part he played in the agitation for a Free Press in India. All his political writings were similarly directed towards the advancement of popular freedom. He protested against the Jury Act of 1827, which sought to introduce religious and racial distinctions into the judicial system by its provision that while a Hindu or Muhammedan could be subject to trial by Christian Jurors, a Christian was exempted from being tried by Hindu or Muhammedan jurors, and that Hindus and Muhammedans would not be permitted to sit on the Grand Jury in the trial of members of their own community. In 1831 in his communications to the Board of Control[2] on the question of the renewal of the Company's Charter, Rāmmohan clearly enunciated his views on the Revenue and Judicial systems. He pointed out that under the Permanent Settlement the zamindars had increased their wealth, but the exorbitantly high rents exacted from the tenants had made the lot of the ryots a miserable one. He

in 1824. Gaurmohan Bidyālaṅkar's *Strī-śikṣā-bidhāyak*, published in 1822 under the patronage of Rādhākānta Deb, did much to help the movement. But Rāmmohan does not appear to have been very much interested in this question of women's education nor taken any part in the movement.

1 *Essay on the Right of Hindoos over Ancestral Property according to the Law of Bengal.* Calcutta 1830; London ed. Smith, Elder and Co. 1832. Jīmūtavāhana's *Dāyabhāga*, which is the source of the Bengal law of inheritance, was already translated into English by H. T. Colebrooke and published in Calcutta in 1810.

2 Published as: *Exposition of the practical operation of the Judicial and Revenue systems of India, and of the General Condition of its native inhabitants, as submitted in evidence to the Authorities in England.* Smith, Elder and Co., London 1832.

advocated a reduction of the rent to be paid by the tenants and a corresponding reduction of the revenue payable by the zaminders. The consequent loss of revenue, he suggested, should be met by a tax on luxuries or by employing low-salaried Indians as collectors instead of high-salaried Europeans. Rāmmohan favoured the Permanent Settlement, but he rightly urged that the maximum rent to be paid by the cultivator should be fixed. This as well as what he said on jury-trial, are two of his concrete views ; but he also advocated the substitution of English for Persian as the official language of law-courts ; appointment of Indian assessors in civil courts ; separation of the office of the judge and the revenue commissioner ; and the codification of criminal and other laws.[1]

As befits a man of great independence of mind, Rāmmohan's politics was undoubtedly animated in these views by a characteristic love of freedom, as well as by a sincere belief in the capability of his countrymen ; and he had enough knowledge and experience of worldly affairs to be really informative. But his politics, however liberal, was of a moderate type ; and like most educated Indians of his day, he believed in the good intentions of the British people. It is no wonder, therefore, that he advocated colonisation in India by European landed aristocracy and European capitalists in his *Remarks on Settlement in India by Europeans* (1832).[2] On several occasions Rāmmohan, no doubt, expressed approbation of republican principles, but it is curious that he heartily rejoiced at the same time in the establishment

1 It is suggested (Bimanbehari Majumdar, *History of Political Thought from Rammohun to Dayananda*, p. 17) that the influence of Bentham probably led Rāmmohan to insist on the codification of civil and criminal law.—The problem of industrial prosperity did not, however, assume enough importance to engage Rāmmohan's attention.

2 It appeared in the General Appendix to the Report of the Select Committee and was so submitted to Parliament. Rāmmohan gives in this essay a singularly daring programme, for an analysis of which see Collet, *op. cit.*, pp. 135-37. It was Rāmmohan's last publication.

of King Leopold in Belgium and spoke warmly of the "condescension and kindness" of King Louis Philippe of France, which immensely gratified him. He does not appear to have taken much interest in the question of the renewal of the Company's Charter, which was to decide the destiny of his country for many years to come.[1] Nevertheless, Rāmmohan had undoubtedly a generous mind which cherished progressive political ideas. But politics was hardly his sphere, and he never had the slightest foresight of how India's political problem would develop and the form it would assume even before the end of the century. It was wise, therefore, that "he latterly expressed a desire to withdraw himself from politics entirely, finding the discussions into which they led him no longer supportable with any comfort to himself."[2] In the history of political thought and endeavour of the nineteenth century, the contribution of the Young Bengal was perhaps more important; and their agitation, which prepared the way for nationalist and democratic movements, was certainly more effective. There is no reason to think that they were "disciples" of Rāmmohan.[3]

HIS GAUḌĪYA VYĀKARAṆ

Like the missionaries and the Paṇḍits of the Fort William College, Rāmmohan was interested in the writing of Bengali text-books and became connected with the Calcutta School Book Society. In the 7th Report (1828, p. 4) of the Society we find the following entry on this subject: "The conviction that a Bengali Grammar better adapted to the instruction of

1 And yet in the memorial meeting held at Calcutta Town Hall on April 5, 1834, Rasik Kṛṣṇa Mallik said that the few provisions that the Charter contained for the good of India are due to the effort of Rāmmohan. We do not know on what ground Rasik Kṛṣṇa said this.

2 *Asiatic Journal*, Nov. 1833.

3 Even though Tārāchaṁd Chakravartī was for sometime secretary of his Brahma Sabhā.

native youths than the one on their list[1] might be compiled, has led your Committee to solicit the services of Baboo Rammohan Roy in preparing one ; and they are happy to report that this gentleman has cheerfully engaged to give his immediate attention to the execution of the work." The work was presumably completed before Rāmmohan's departure for Europe in 1830 ; and we read in the 9th Report (1932, p. 31) of the Society that the work was already in the Press. In their 10th Report (1834, p. 6) we are informed that "the Grammar prepared by late Raja Rammohun Roy, and superintended through the press by his son Radhaprasad Roy, is now in circulation." The work, called *Gauḍīya Vyākaraṇ*[2], was actually published in April 1833. Rāmmohan had already published in English a grammar of the Bengali language in 1826 for the instruction of Europeans[3], and the present work was more or less its Bengali version. The preface, however, makes no mention of this fact, but it simply states[4] that as Rāmmohan's intended visit to Europe kept him busy he could only prepare the manuscript copy, which had

1 This appears to be James Keith's Bengali Grammar mentioned in the 3rd Report (1820). Gaṅgākiśor Bhaṭṭāchāryya's Grammar mentioned in the Appendix to that Report was published in 1816, but it was really an English grammar "containing what is necessary to the knowledge of the English tongue".

2 গৌড়ীয় ব্যাকরণ তদ্ভাষা বিরচিত শ্রীযুত রাজা রামমোহন রায় দ্বারা পাণ্ডুলিপি ও কলিকাতা স্কুলবুক সোসাইটি দ্বারা এবং তন্মুদ্রাযন্ত্রে মুদ্রিত হয়। ১৮৩৩ ॥ pp. 96 ; Grammar of the Bengalee Language, Calcutta. Printed at the School Book Society's Press and sold at its Depository, Circular Road. 1833.

3 Bengalee Grammar in the English Language, Calcutta: Printed at the Unitarian Press, 1826, pp. 140. See Bengali Works ed. Rājnārāyaṇ Bose and Ānandachandra Bedāntavāgiś, Calcutta Śaka 1795 (=1873 A.D.). pp. 832-33. Also mentioned by Collet (p. 75) who quotes lines from its Introduction.

4 পরন্তু তাঁহার ইংলণ্ডগমন সময়ের নৈকট্য হওয়াতে ব্যস্ততা ও সময়ের অল্পতা প্রযুক্ত কেবল পাণ্ডুলিপি মাত্র প্রস্তুত করিয়াছিলেন পুনদৃষ্টিরও সাবকাশ হয় নাই। পরে যাত্রাকালীন ইহার শুদ্ধাশুদ্ধ ও বিবেচনার

to be revised by the authorities of the Society. It seems, therefore, that Rāmmohan could not devote his full attention to this work, which owes its final revised form to the care of Society's editor. Nevertheless, this first Bengali Grammar written by a Bengali is undoubtedly a most remarkable production. Even if it was preceded by grammars written by Halhed and Carey, it was not a Sanskrit grammar masquerading as Bengali grammar, but it rightly attempted to deal with real Bengali forms and indicated the proper method of writing a Bengali grammar. Rāmmohan appears also to have composed a Geography in Bengali as a school text-book, It is mentioned as more or less ready for the press in the 4th Report (1821, p. 20) of the School Book Society, but we find that it was not yet published in 1823. It is not mentioned in the later Reports of the Society, and we do not know when, if at all, it was published.

AS A WRITER OF BENGALI PROSE

On the strength of his Bengali writings in general and of these works in particular Rāmmohan has been exuberantly hailed as 'the father' of Bengali prose. Of the many myths circulated about Rāmmohan this is perhaps the most extraordinary. At a time when our knowledge of early Bengali prose was nebulous, such a view might, as it did, pass current; but today the designation, which can be claimed by more than one writer flourishing before and after Rāmmohan, is not only extravagant but also unjustifiable. Bengali prose in the nineteenth century is not the creation of a single individual, but it evolved through the tentative efforts of a large number of writers. We must not in this connexion forget the earlier contribution of the foreign and Indian authors of the Fort William College, who laid the foundation

ভার স্কুলবুক সোসাইটির অধ্যক্ষের উপর অর্পণ করিয়াছিলেন। তেঁহ যত্নপূর্ব্বক তাহা সম্পন্ন করিলেন। The Society's editor was probably Rādhākānta Deb.

of modern Bengali prose. Among them it was Rāmmohan's older contemporary Mṛtyuñjay Bidyālaṅkār, who first gave to it a proper literary form and anticipated the elegance and balanced phrasing of Īśvar Chandra Bidyāsāgar. Although Mṛtyuñjay was prone to the affected language of the Paṇḍits and his diction was still immature, he was yet fully alive to the sense of style and could often attain ease and naturalness, as well as literary grace and charm. As a literary language Rāmmohan's prose, on the other hand, scarcely possesses a distinctive value. Compared with that of earlier and contemporary writers, his argumentative prose is hardly attractive ; it is stiff, pedantic and devoid of all literary grace. It should be borne in mind that almost all his works were concerned with Śāstric exposition or pure polemic, and consisted mostly of topical tracts and pamphlets. They are of argumentation all compact. He had the mentality, not of a littérateur, but of a mediaeval scholastic, which revelled in the niceties of abstract reasoning, and in which there was little room for literary inspiration or urge for literary creation. Even the missionaries could write better and more intelligible prose, while the easy and facetious style of his contemporary Bhabānīcharaṇ stands in marked contrast to Rāmmohan's harsh, unrhythmical and difficult diction, which is far from the best that this period has to show in Bengali prose. In his Bengali Grammar Rāmmohan insists upon the value of simple and sensible expression, but his own practice scarcely moves in this direction.

What then is the position of Rāmmohan's writings in the evolution of Bengali prose in the nineteenth century? It has been urged that Rāmmohan for the first time took up serious subjects for treatment; but even for this, a heavy style should not be mistaken for a really weighty style. In the next generation Akṣay Kumār Datta dealt with serious subjects, but he did not follow the way of Rāmmohan. Nor did Kṛṣṇamohan Bandyopādhyāy, whose comparatively clear discussion of philosophical topics in his *Ṣaḍ-darśan-saṃbād*, bears no stamp

of Rāmmohan's peculiarly affected diction. It appears, therefore, that even in the matter of serious subjects the later history of Bengali prose does not bear witness to any influence of Rāmmohan's style and treatment. Rāmmohan was the father, not of Bengali prose, but of the particular kind of stilted prose which he created and which now remains isolated as a mere curiosity. For, in the evolution of Bengali prose there is an historical continuity between the earlier productions of Carey, Mṛtyuñjay and Tāriṇīcharaṇ, on the one hand, and the later works of Bidyāsāgar, Pyārīchānd and Baṅkimchandra on the other; Rāmmohan's prose never influenced nor had it any definite place in this regular course of development. It is no wonder, therefore, that none of his works ever became a classic in Bengali literature.

HIS VISIT TO EUROPE

Rāmmohan had long cherished the intention of visiting Europe, but for various reasons it could not be realised. An opportunity occurred in 1830. Akhbar II, the titular emperor of Delhi, appointed Rāmmohan his envoy to the king of England for representing his grievances with regard to his claim on certain revenue and stipend. The title of Rājā was conferred on Rāmmohan by the emperor with a grant of Rs. 70,000/-. As the Company's government in India declined to recognise the appointment or the title, he had to proceed to England as a private individual; but immediately on arrival he proclaimed himself as the accredited agent of the emperor of Delhi. He sailed from Calcutta on November 15, 1830 on board the *Albion* and reached Liverpool on April 8, 1831 after a voyage round the Cape of Good Hope. He was, thus, the first Indian of a high position to cross the sea and set a conspicuous precedent to the host of his educated countrymen who have since studied and travelled in Europe.

On Rāmmohan's reception in England, his social life in London and his brief visit of France (September-December

1832), much has been written by Mary Carpenter and Sophia Dobson Collet,[1] and it is not necessary to linger over the details. He was certainly an attraction, not only to his Unitarian friends, but also to some high-placed persons as the first Indian visitor of eminence.[2] Among celebrities, he met the historian William Roscoe and the philosopher Jeremy Bentham. He was entertained at banquets and lionised in the picturesque setting of a stage pageant or an imposing postscript to a career already complete. He succeeded in his mission in so far as he could get the annual stipend of the Delhi emperor increased by the Court of Directors. He could watch the agitation over the first Reform Bill and had the satisfaction of being present when the appeal against the abolition of Satī was rejected by the Privy Council and the decision announced on July 11, 1832. He published English editions of his works. He was invited to appear and give evidence before the Select Committee appointed by Parliament to consider the renewal of the Company's Charter. He did not appear, but submitted his views on Revenue and Judicial systems in the form of communications to the Board of Control, to which we have already referred. This apparent lack of greater interest in a matter which affected the destiny of his country has been attributed[3] to a perceptible decay of his mental powers. Whether this is true or not, his intellectual career was evidently drawing to a close. The climate of England appears to have affected his health, and we are told that "he had grown very stout and looked full and flushed". To add to this, the failure of the banking houses of his Cal-

1 This has been supplemented by several articles by Brajendranath Banerji in *Modern Review*, 1929, pp. 19-21, 160-65, 381-88 etc; also in his *Raja Rammohun Roy's Mission to England*, Calcutta 1926.

2 His first appearance in London was so strange that even the street urchins, we are told, greeted him with the cry of Tippoo!

3 In the obituary notice which appeared in the *Asiatic* Journal, November 1833. This is disputed by Collet, *op. cit.* p. 150, but Collet seems to be unduly biased against Sanford Arnot.

cutta and London agents placed him in pecuniary embarrassment and anxiety. His appeal in these straits to the Court of Directors for a loan on personal security received no response. Weary in body and mind, he came to some of his English friends in Bristol, accompanied by Miss Hare, sister of his friend David Hare of Calcutta, to have some rest and change. Only about a fortnight after arrival, on September 19, 1833, he suddenly fell ill. After an attack lasting only for eight days he died, apparently of brain fever, on September 27, 1833. He was interred on October 18 at 2 p.m., not in a Christian cemetery, but at his own request in Stapleton Grove near the house where he stayed in Bristol. After ten years, on May 29, 1843, his mortal remains were removed to Arno's Vale on the outskirts of Bristol by his friend, Dvārakānāth Ṭhākur, and a beautiful mausoleum was built by him during his visit to England.

ESTIMATE OF HIS CHARACTER AND PERSONALITY

From what we have said above there cannot be such doubt that Rāmmohan had a multiple personality and his activity was many-sided ; but it will be seen that his writings constituted the chief work of his life. The astuteness and enterprise in worldly affairs which characterised his early life formed the foundation of his most eventful career and gave him an eminently practical mind which disclaimed all pretensions of a reformer or religious teacher. By his vigorous writings and eminent position he gave an impetus to some of the social, educational and political movements of his day, but it is an exaggeration to say that they all started from him alone, or that he actively directed any of them. But more than these questions, he occupied himself with religious enquiry ever since 1805 ; and after he settled in Calcutta in 1815 he carried on controversies with the representatives of various religious persuasions. As the metropolis was the centre of the conflicting Hindu, Muslim and Chris-

tian faiths, he had an opportunity of studying their fundamentals and watching their practices. From an examination of these historic religions he wanted to find out their respective pristine forms, free from later accretion of creed and dogma ; and in his controversies he defended what he believed to be the original Hinduism, Islamism and Christianity against the champions of orthodoxy in each case, He wrote books on the belief which he found held in common by these three persuasions, namely, the worship of one God. This is the only point on which his opinion is clear and emphatic ; but in the matter of religious belief in general it is easier to say what he was not than what he was. Just before he left for England he is reported to have laughingly said that on his death each of the various faiths, Hindu, Muslim and Christian, would respectively claim him as their own, but he declared that he belonged to none of them. His works state, not what he personally believed, but what he found in the scriptures of different faiths. He opposed the Christian doctrine of Trinity, yet he regularly attended places of worship which believed in the doctrine. He attacked current forms of Hinduism, but he carefully avoided open violation of its practices which would make him lose caste. From his studies in Islamic theology he seems to have acquired an aggressive form of monotheistic belief, but he would not accept the prophetical pretension of Muhammad as much as that of Christ.

As a matter of fact, Rāmmohan did not reject any truth to be found in any scripture, but his rational mind would not accept any particular book or teacher as infallible. He ultimately arrived at the conclusion that theism lies at the core of every religion, but that it found different expression in different people according as their religious genius gave it a native shape and colour. In this rationalistic enquiry he was, as Monier Williams justly says, the first earnest student of the science of comparative theology. There is nothing

new in his ultimate position, but it claims merit as an early elucidation of the spirit of theism inherent in the whole machinery of Hindu, Muslim and Christian theology. Recognising the diversity of theistic beliefs, he established, in a broad spirit of toleration, the Brahma-Sabhā as a public meeting place, not of a particular religious community, but of people of all sects and persuasions. He never aspired, however, nor could he do much towards building up a constructive theistic programme.

It should not be forgotten that in the second quarter of the nineteenth century the impact of Western education was leading to a new awakening in Bengal. It was an age of great intellectual activity, in which Rāmmohan played his part in the sphere of education, society, politics and religion as much as some progressive Hindus and the Reforming Young Bengal did in their own way. But it was also an age of spiritual uncertainty and unrest, consequent upon the advent of new ideas and ideals. Some took to social reform, others to social conservation ; some had blind faith, others became unbelievers ; some changed their religion, others gave a new exposition of the old religion. Rāmmohan's assertion of theistic belief is only one aspect of this universal quest. He went back to the ancient scriptures and found the essence of Hinduism in a particular type of monotheism which he deduced from the Vedānta. His practical mind could not accept the severe monistic idealism of Śaṃkara, but on it he superimposed the monotheistic belief adduced from Muslim and Christian faiths. His Brahma, no doubt, was derived from the Brahma of Indian religious belief, but it was transformed into a Unitarian god of the West. Moreover, in order to maintain his theistic position he limited himself to the Upaniṣads and the Vedānta; but these works give us only one aspect, however exalted, of the ancient system of thought. It is, therefore, difficult to admit to-day that Rāmmohan's exposition of the Vedānta of a monotheistic type is the only true form of Hinduism or the only cultural heritage of ancient

India. It was accepted in a modified form[1] by a particular religious community in Bengal, but not by the Bengali society at large, which evolved its own faith and practice on a broader basis of ancient wisdom and modern experience. The individualistic rationalism of Rāmmohan could not be generally accepted because it had no place for sentiment ; it consisted of a bold, impersonal and unattractive exercise of the intellect on a somewhat abstract objective. He was not the only rationalist or Hindu revivalist of his day, but he was essentially a scholastic, whose method consisted chiefly of an attempt to establish everything by argumentation and polemic; and he knew all the tactics of self-defence, publicity and propaganda. In this connexion Collet pertinently observes (p. 54) on Rāmmohan's proneness to the use of pseudonym in some of his religious tracts: "The artifice of self-multiplication and self-concealment by aid of pseudonyms savours more of the journalist than the rational religious reformer ; but however we may explain it, Rāmmohan seems to have quite a liking for such tactics."

Indeed, it would be a misreading of the whole trend of his career to claim, as Rāmmohan himself never claimed, that he was a religious personality or a religious teacher. In none of his writings there is any trace of personal religious realisation nor any fervour of genuine piety. What he proposed was the result of an intellectual pursuit, in which we miss the true accent of a "prophet's" utterance; and it is no wonder that it was limited in its appeal. Rāmmohan had the temperament of a subtle schoolman of mediaeval times, however much his general outlook was modern; and it is not surprising that he had nothing to say about the cultural and humanistic aspect of literature or literary education which, as we know, brought about the regeneration of modern Bengal in 19th century. He was not such a humanist as he is often repre-

1 While Debendranāth Ṭhākur did not accept Rāmmohan's fundamental Vedāntic position, Sibnath Sastri declared: "His work was mainly negative and reformatory, and not positive and constructive".

sented to be, nor a "Universal Man" as he is rhetorically styled, but simply and chiefly a rationalist to whom religion, like any social or political problem, was a matter of elaborate reasoning and disputation, and not directly of intimate realisation. From the rational point of view, however, Rāmmohan was the first to attempt a comparative study of three great religious systems. This can be taken as his most important contribution to contemporary religious thought, even if his excessive reliance on sheer reasoning and aggressive reformatory zeal stood in the way of a really objective and balanced study. But it is meaningless adulation, fundamentally and historically, which applauds him as the Apostle of modern Bengal. Modern Bengal did not come into being by his writings alone, but it developed in a way which was perhaps beyond his dream, by the united effort, ranging over a long stretch of time, of the Reforming as well as the Literary Young Bengal who had imbibed liberal humanistic ideas of a modern education. Nevertheless, it stands to Rāmmohan's great credit that even though his mind was deeply rooted in the past and drew its sustenance from ancient scholastic learning, he was yet one of the foremost men of his time, whose rational outlook was not rigid, but was fully alert and deeply sensitive to the new influence in its liberalising bearing upon old problems, which now crowded at the crossways.

CHAPTER IV

CONTEMPORARIES OF RĀMMOHAN RĀY

RĀMKAMAL SEN (1783-1844)

Of the immediate contemporaries of Rāmmohan Rāy, who are connected with Bengali Literature, we have already mentioned Rāmkamal Sen (1783-1844).[1] He compiled and published a Bengali-English Dictionary in 1825 and a Bengali Hitopadeśa for the Calcutta School Book Society in 1820. Although he took an active interest in the spread of Western education he was a firm believer in orthodox tradition; and as one of the members of the Committee of Management of the Hindu College[2] he was primarily responsible for removing Derozio from the post of a teacher in the college for alleged "free thinking."[3]

RĀDHĀKĀNTA DEB (1784-1867)

One of the supporters of Rāmkamal was his contemporary Rādhākānta Deb (b. March 10, 1784) who was connected with the Hindu College for thirty years from January 1817. He succeeded his father Gopīmohan Deb as a Director of the College in 1818.[4] If Rādhākānta belonging, as he did, to the

1 See above Chap. II, p. 492-93.

2 He became its Governor in 1823. Rāmkamal was also secretary to Calcutta Sanskrit College in 1835-38.

3 And yet Rāmkamal's grandson, Keśab Chandra Sen, became of the radical reformes of later times!—Pearychand Mittra thinks that "Keshab Chandra's Brahmoism had a tinge of Ramkomal's Baiṣṇavism".

4 Chiefly through Rādhākānta's efforts the Bengali Pāṭhśālā of the College was established in 1839. He resigned from its Committee through difference of opinion with the European members over the conversion of its teacher Kailās Chandra Basu (in 1848) and student Gurucharaṇ Siṃha (in 1849) by Christian missionaries.

old Śobhābazar Rāj family, was bigoted in his religious opinion,[1] his bigotry had the good effect of protecting the reckless Young Bengal of the College from the aggressive proselytizing zeal of Christian missionaries. It was through his effort that the Hindu Charitable Institution was started on March 1, 1846, with Bhūdeb Chandra Mukhopādhyāy as one of the teachers ; and in this he had the support of Debendra Nāth Ṭhākur. Afterwards on May 2, 1853 the Hindu Metropolitan College (Hindu Hitārthī Vidyālay) was opened at Sinduriāpaṭi with Rādhākānta as President and Debendranāth as a member (afterwards secretary) of its Committee. D. L. Richardson[2] was for some time a teacher

1 Kissory Chand Mittra describes Rādhākānta as "a consistent and orthodox Hindu" who "did not outgrow the prejudices of the nursery"! It is noteworthy that Rādhākānta supported the cruel custom of Satī. On women's education his views were liberal, but he did not approve of sending girls out to school, himself opening a girl's school for teaching English and Bengali in his own house.

2 David Lester Richardson, journalist, poet and essayist, was born in 1801. He came out to India as a military officer in the employ of the E. I. Co. after 1819. In 1824 he went back to England, and came out again in 1829. His first volume of poems was published in 1822, and his Sonnets and Other Poems in 1825. He was Professor at Hindu College in 1835, becoming Principal in 1841-43. He retired on account of ill health on April 19, 1843. His *Selections from British Poets* and *Literary Leaves* (Calcutta: Thacker and Co.) were published in 1840. He went back to England, and returned again in 1846. He became Professor at Krishnanagar College, which was founded on January 1, 1846. In 1847 he was Principal of the Mohsin College at Hooghly. On Oct. 29, 1848, he became Principal of the Hindu College for one year; but he retired on account of difference of opinion with J. J. Drinkwater Bethune who called him "a hoary-headed libertine". In 1849 he became Professor at the Oriental Seminary of Gour Mohan Addy. His *Literary Chitchat* was published in 1850. On May 2, 1853 the Hindu Metropolitan College was started at the house of Rām Gopāl Mallick at Sinduriāpaṭi on the Chitpur Road. This was done as a protest against the admission of a prostitute's (Bulbul's) son in the Hindu College. This new College was patronised by the millionaire Mati Lal Seal, and its Committee was presided over by Rādhākānta Deb

of this College, but it did not last beyond 1858. We have already noted that the Calcutta School Society was established (Sept. 1, 1818) chiefly through the efforts of David Hare and Rādhākānta Deb (who became its secretary) for supervising numerous schools in Calcutta where English was taught, especially three important free schools respectively at Simla, Ṭhaṇṭhaniā and Paṭaldāṅgā. Rādhākānta was also an influential member of the Calcutta School Book Society, which was established in July 1817 for the purpose of preparing suitable books for use in these schools.

At the same time Rādhākānta took a great deal of interest in indigenous Sanskrit education. He was a member of the Calcutta Sanskrit College Committee during 1836-37. He supported at his own expense the Hātibāgān Catuṣpāṭhī founded by his father Gopīmohan. Rādhākānta's chief achievement in this direction was the compilation, by a number of foremost Paṇḍits of his time, of a voluminous cyclopaedic dictionary called *Śabda-kalpadruma*, of which the first part was published in 1818 and the last seventh part[1] in 1851. Rādhākānta retired to Brindaban in 1864, where he died three years later on April 19, 1867.

Rādhākānta's many-sided activity left him little leisure for purely literary work ; but his name is associated with two publications of the Calcutta School Book Society. They are: (1) *Nīti-kathā* (April 1818) which gave a selection of thirty-one stories translated from different sources by Rādhākānta, Tāriṇīcharaṇ Mitra and Rāmkamal Sen (2) *Bāṅglā Śikṣā-grantha* (1821) which included in its scope an account

with Debendra Nāth Ṭhākur as a member. Keśab Chandra Sen was for some time a student of this school. According to Raj Narayan Basu who was once Richardson's pupil, Richardson did not believe in the Christian creed but he was no atheist.—For Richardson see Bepin Bihari Sen in the *National Magazine* Sept 1900, p. 350; Brajendra Nath Banerji, *Saṃbād Patre Sekāler Kathā*, ii, pp. 702-5.

1 An abridged edtion was published in 1827, and a supplement in 1858.

of the alphabet, grammar, some history, geography and arithmetic. Rādhākānta himself describes it as "a Bengali Spelling Book after Lindley Murray's plan." He also states that he "revised the Bengali translation of an easy introduction to Astronomy".

BHABĀNĪCHARAṆ BANDYOPĀDHYĀY (1787-1848)

Bhabānīcharaṇ Bandyopādhyāy is remembered to-day chiefly as a contemporary and antagonist of Rāmmohan Rāy, but he was in his day an influential author and journalist who represented the conservative Hindu society. Son of Rāmjay Bhaṭṭāchārya, Bhabānīcharaṇ was born at Nārāyaṇpur in the Pergana Ukhḍā in 1787 A.D. His father, who was employed in the Calcutta Mint, had a house at Kalutola where Bhabānīcharaṇ appears to have been brought up in early boyhood. As was customary in those days he learnt Persian and probably some English, besides Sanskrit. In 1803, at the age of sixteen, he was employed as a Sarkār to Messrs J. Duckett and Co., and served in that firm for about eleven years. Later on, he acted successively as chief clerk to various well known officials, such as Herbert Compton (afterwards Chief Justice of Bombay) and Bishop Middleton. On the establishment of Bishop's College he is said to have acted as its Secretary. He had a chequered career thereafter. He became for some time Khātāñji (Chief Accountant) to the Hooghly Collectorate, Dewan of Calcutta Tax Office and *banian*[1] to Hickey, Baillie Co. He was for some time manager of the *Englishman* under J. H. Stocqueler ; and here probably he gained some experience in newspaper management. He died at Calcutta on February 20, 1848 (Phālgun 9, 1254 B.S.).[2]

1 The 18th century Banian has been described as "interpreter, head book-keeper, head secretary, head broker, the supplier of cash and cash-keeper and in general secret-keeper".

2 On Bhabānīcharaṇ see ধর্ম্মসভার অতীত সম্পাদক ৺বাবু ভবানীচরণ বন্দ্যোপাধ্যায় মহাশয়ের জীবনচরিত দৃষ্ট শ্রুত পবিত্র চরিত্র বিবরণ

After abolition by Lord Hastings of restrictions on the Press on April 19, 1818, Bhabānīcharaṇ (jointly with Tārāchāṁd Datta of Kalutola) published a weekly paper called *Saṃbād-kaumudī*, the first number of which appeared on Tuesday December 4, 1821. Its primary object was to champion the cause of orthodox Hindu society chiefly against the attacks of the Christian missionaries. Bhabānīcharaṇ edited the first thirteen numbers, but he severed connexion with the paper on account of difference of opinion on the custom of Satī which he approved, and himself started on Monday March 5, 1822 the *Samāchār-chandrikā* as a weekly paper, which became a bi-weekly from April 1829, published on Monday and Thursday. When the Satī was abolished by law, Bhabānīcharaṇ founded the *Dharma-sabhā*, with himself as secretary for the purpose of making an appeal against the abolition,[1] and enlisted Rāmkamal Sen, Rādhākānta Deb, Tāriṇīcharaṇ Mitra and Umānanda Ṭhākur as members. From the Samāchar-chandrikā Press he published on country-made paper in Punthi form some of the religious books for the use of orthodox people, namely, Śrīmad-bhāgavata (1830), Bhagavad-gītā (1833), Manu-saṃhitā (1833), the nineteen Smṛti works (1833), and the twenty-eight Tattvas of Raghunandan (1848). He went on pilgrimage twice, and travelled extensively in Upper India in 1819 and then in Southern India in 1834. He narrated his experience in prose and verse respectively in শ্রীশ্রীগয়াতীর্থ বিস্তার (1831) and পুরুষোত্তম চন্দ্রিকা অর্থাৎ শ্রীক্ষেত্রধামের বিবরণ (1844).[2] His *Āścarya-upākhyān*

Calcutta 1849 (pp. 1-40); S. K. De in *IHQ*, March 1926, pp. 54-59, March 1927, pp. 13-20; Brajendra Nath Banerji, introd. to his ed. of *Kalikātā Kamalālay* (Ranjan Publishing House, Calcutta 1936).

1 The Dharma-sabhā was established generally স্বধর্ম ও সদাচার ও সদ্ব্যবহারাদি রক্ষার্থ of orthodox Hindu Society. Bhabānīcharaṇ was its secretary till his death in 1848.

2 It gives a topographical and historical account of the holy places in the Ganjam district, expecially of Śrīkṣetra or Puri.

(1835)[1] gives in verse an account of Kālīśaṅkar Rāy, a Kāyastha zamindar of Datta family of Narail, Jessore.

But Bhabānīcharaṇ's most important work was the *Kalikātā-kamalālay* (1823), which gives vivid glimpses into the city-life of Calcutta during the second decade of the 19th century. It professes to be a manual of etiquette for country people who come for the first time to Calcutta and find themselves bewildered by its strange manners, customs and speech. The scope and object of work are briefly described by its interesting preface thus:

পল্লিগ্রামনিবাসী ও অন্যান্য নগরবাসী লোক এই কলিকাতায় আসিয়া এখানকার আচার বিচার ব্যবহার রীতি ও বাক্‌কৌশলাদি অবগত হইয়া আশু অসমর্থ হয়েন। তৎপ্রযুক্ত শঙ্কাযুক্ত হইয়া এতন্নগরবাসি লোকের দিগের নিকট গমানাগমন করেন এবং সভ্য ভব্য হইয়াও তাঁহারদিগের নিকটে অসভ্য ও অভব্য ন্যায় বসিয়া থাকেন। কারণ যখন নগরবাসী বহুজন একত্র হইয়া প্রশ্নোত্তরভাবে পরস্পর কথোপকথন করেন তৎকালে পল্লিগ্রামনিবাসী ব্যক্তি কোন সদুত্তর করিলেও নগরস্থ মহাশয়েরা তাহা গ্রহণ না করিয়া কহেন, তুমি পল্লিগ্রামনিবাসী অর্থাৎ পাড়াগেঁয়ে মানুষ, অত্যল্প দিবস কলিকাতায় আসিয়াছ, এখানকার রীতিজ্ঞ নহ, তোমার এ কথায় প্রয়োজন নাঞি। এ উত্তরে নিরুত্তর হইয়া ঐ ব্যক্তি দুঃখিত হয়েন। অতএব এই কলিকাতা মহানগরের স্থূলবৃত্তান্ত বিবরণ করিয়া কলিকাতা কমলালয় নামক গ্রন্থ করণে প্রবর্ত্ত হইলাম। এতদ্‌গ্রন্থ পাঠে বা শ্রবণে অনায়াসে এখানকার ব্যবহার ও রীতি ও বাক্‌চাতুরী ইত্যাদি আশু জ্ঞাত হইতে পারিবেন। অধিকন্তু কলিকাতা কমলালয় হইতে বৃত্তান্তরূপ অনেক রত্নলাভ হইতে পারিবেক। ইহাতে এক সন্দেহ আছে যে দোষদর্শী মূর্খরূপ কুম্ভীর নিন্দকরূপী সর্প ইহারা এ কমলালয় হইতে রত্নলাভের ব্যাঘাত করিবার নিমিত্ত স্বীয় স্বভাব দ্বারা অনেক

1 আশ্চর্য্য উপাখ্যান অর্থাৎ মুক্ত কালীশঙ্কর রায়ের বিবরণ। ক্ষমতাদি-কীর্ত্তিকৃত্য ইহাতে বর্ণন॥ কলিকাতা নগরে সমাচারচন্দ্রিকাযন্ত্রে মুদ্রিত হইল। ১ চৈত্র ১২৪১ (=১৩ মার্চ্চ ১৮৩৫)।

যত্ন পাইবেক, অর্থাৎ এতদ্গ্রন্থ গ্রহণে বা পাঠে অনেক বাধা জন্মাইবেক, তাহাতে বুঝি বিজ্ঞেরা এতদ্গ্রন্থ গ্রহণ না করেন। কিন্তু এই স্থির করিয়াছি যে বিজ্ঞেরদিগের বিজ্ঞত্বরূপ ঔষধি দ্বারা তাহারা ভৎর্সিত ও তাড়িত হইয়া অবশ্যই নিবারিত হইবেক। অতএব কলিকাতা কমলালয় সমাদৃত হইয়া সতেরদিগের সর্ব্বদা বৃত্তান্ত ও বাক্কৌশলাদি রূপ রত্ন প্রদান করিবেন।

এই গ্রন্থে চারি তরঙ্গ হইবেক। আমার প্রার্থনা যদি গ্রন্থমধ্যে বর্ণ-ভ্রম ও আসক্তিদোষ থাকে তবে সাধুমহাশয়েরা স্বীয় সাধুস্বভাবপ্রযুক্ত তাহা গ্রহণ না করিয়া তাৎপর্য্য গ্রহণ করিলে আমার শ্রমসার্থক্য হইবেক।[1]

The present volume contains only one তরঙ্গ in pp. i+viii+91, and the colophon at the end of the book reads ইতি শ্রীভবানীচরণ শর্ম্মকৃত কলিকাতা কমলালয়ে প্রথম: তরঙ্গ: সমাপ্ত:॥ It is doubtful whether the book was ever completed in four তরঙ্গs as the author contemplated and set forth in his preface.

Accordingly the strange title of the book is thus explained at the beginning: কলিকাতার সাগরের সহিত সাদৃশ্য আছে তৎপ্রযুক্ত কলিকাতা কমলালয় নাম স্থির হইল, কমলা লক্ষ্মী তাঁহার আলয় এই অর্থ দ্বারা কমলালয় শব্দে যেমন সমুদ্রের উপস্থিতি হইতেছে তেমন কলিকাতার উপস্থিতিও হইতে পারে অতএব কলিকাতা কমলালয় শব্দে যোগার্থ রহিল (p. 5). This is followed by a brief account of this "ocean" called Calcutta (pp. 5-6). The book is written in the form of a dialogue between a নগরবাসী and a পল্লীগ্রামবাসী (called বিদেশী here), the latter being an enquirer into the ways of the city people, and the alternative title প্রশ্ন উত্তর দ্বারা কলিকাতার রীতিবর্ণন justly indicates the scope as well as the form of the work. At the outset, the vices of city-life are touched upon, as well as the non-orthodox ways which some people have taken up and which are not approved by its orthodox author. This is followed by an interesting account of the daily life of the different ranks of people living in the city

1 The passage has been punctuated by us.

(p. 16). Those who are Dewan (দেওয়ান) or Muchchadi (মুচ্ছদি), that is বিষয়িভদ্রলোক, get up early in the morning and after washing their faces, they spend the early part of the day in anointing their body with oil (তৈলমর্দ্দন), bathing (স্নানক্রিয়া), পূজা, হোম, দান, বলি প্রভৃতি কর্ম্ম, ভোজন, কিঞ্চিৎ বিশ্রাম, after which they, in the language of the author, অপূর্ব্ব পোষাক জামা জোড়া ইত্যাদি পরিধান করিয়া পাল্‌কী বা অপূর্ব্ব শকটারোহণে কর্ম্মস্থানে গমন করেন। After the day's work in office, they come home, change and wash গঙ্গোদকস্পর্শে পবিত্র হইয়া সায়ংসন্ধ্যাবন্দনাদি সমাপন করিয়া জলযোগান্তর পুনর্ব্বার বৈঠক হয়, when people come to visit them, or they go out visiting. The daily life of the middle-class people is almost the same, but the author adds কেবল দান বৈঠকি আলাপের অল্পতা এবং পরিশ্রমের বাহুল্য। Regarding poorer people, the author remarks: ঐ ধারা কেবল আহার ও দানাদি কর্ম্মের লাঘব আছে আর শ্রমবিষয়ে প্রাবল্য কারণ কেহ মুহুরী, কেহ মেট বা বাজার সরকার ইত্যাদি কর্ম্ম করিয়া থাকেন বিস্তর পথ হাঁটিতে হয় পরে প্রায় প্রতিদিন রাত্রে গিয়া দেওয়ানজীর নিকট আজ্ঞা যে আজ্ঞা মহাশয় মহাশয় করিতে হয়, না করিলেও নয় পোড়া উদরের জ্বালা (p. 17). Those who are more fortunate lead an indolent life, take a siesta in the afternoon, get up at 4 P.M., when কেহ বা আপন বিষয় দৃষ্টি করেন কেহ বা পুরাণাদি শ্রবণ করিয়া থাকেন। Here follow long ত্রিপদী verses which sing the praises of পুরাণ শ্রবণ। The বিদেশী expresses surprise, but the নগরবাসী reassures him that these people are religious, although religiosity in his opinion consists of gifts to Brahmans and Pandits: সোনারূপার দুই চারি দানসাগর, অধ্যাপক ও পণ্ডিত বিদায়, ১০০।৮০ ঘড়া গাড়ু থালা বাটি বিতরণ ইত্যাদি। But the বিদেশী alludes to the reckless habits of certain anglicised gentlemen of the city: অত্যন্ত অপূর্ব্ব শিষ্ট শান্ত মহাশয়েরা অসৌচ (*sic*) সময়ে শুদ্ধাচারার্থে কেবল ব্রাণ্ডিমাত্র পান করেন, অন্য সময়ে আহার বাজারের পাক করা মাংস মিঠাই ও মুছলমানকৃত পাওরুটী এবং নানা-

প্রকার সরাপ ইত্যাদি দ্রব্যসকল ভোজন করেন। পরিচ্ছদ অর্থাৎ পোষাক ধুতি প্রভৃতি বস্ত্র পরিত্যাগ করিয়া ইজার জামাজোড়া ইত্যাদি পরেন কালাচর্ম্মের পাদুকা ফিতেবান্ধা গোড়তোলা মাথানেঁড়া বোঁচা সকল পায়ে দেন। But the নগরবাসী assures him that these are not the manners of a gentleman.

We then have a discussion of the peculiar speech of the city people who mix their Bengali with words and idioms derived from Persian and English. The author gives a fairly long list of such foreign words used, together with their indigenous Bengali equivalents, in parallel columns (pp. 25-35). The নগরবাসী justifies this peculiar speech on the plea that অর্থকরী বিদ্যোপার্জ্জনের আবশ্যকতা আছে, but he would not defend the use of a foreign word where there is a Bengali equivalent for it, merely for the sake of fashion or pedantry, and he gives examples of such words (pp. 36-39).

The author, of course, extols the old fashioned Bengali life which consisted in ব্রাহ্মণ পণ্ডিত প্রতিপালন and in observing the old social manners and customs, and condemns the selfish life of those modernised Babus who spend everything on themselves. In this connection, the author dilates upon the question of education, establishment of schools by the School Book Society and refers to the usefulness of printing books by subscription: বালকদিগের পড়িবার নিমিত্ত উত্তম উত্তম গ্রন্থ বাঙ্গালা ভাষায় প্রস্তুত করিবার কারণ স্কুল বুক সোসাইটি অর্থাৎ পাঠশালার পুস্তক প্রস্তুত করণ কারণ এক সমাজ স্থাপন করিয়াছেন তদ্দ্বারা নানাবিধ গ্রন্থ প্রস্তুত করিয়া ঐ বালকদিগকে প্রদান করিয়া থাকেন এবং বালকদিগের কি প্রকার শিক্ষা হইতেছে তাহার পরীক্ষা করিয়া থাকেন অপর শ্রীযুত ডেভিড হের নামক এক সাহেব নিজ অর্থ ব্যয় করিয়া পূর্ব্বোক্ত রীত্যনুসারে এক পাঠশালা করিয়া দিয়াছেন এবং আপনিও মনোযোগপূর্ব্বক তাহার অনুসন্ধান করেন (p. 80). There is also an allusion to the establishment of the Hindu College: কলিকাতার সুপ্রীম কোর্ট আদালতের প্রধান জজ শ্রীযুত স্যার ইড্‌ওয়ার্ড ইএষ্ট সাহেব হিন্দুবালকদিগের

নিমিত্ত হিন্দু কালেজ নামক এক বিদ্যালয় স্থাপিত করণের সময়ে অনেক ধনিলোককে আহ্বান করিয়াছিলেন তাহাতে শ্রীল শ্রীযুত মহারাজা তেজচন্দ্র বাহাদুর এবং শ্রীযুত চন্দ্রকুমার ঠাকুর প্রভৃতি অনেকের মনোযোগ দ্বারা ঐ কালেজ স্থাপিত হইয়াছে সেই কালেজে অনেক বালক নানা বিদ্যা উপার্জ্জন করিয়াছে এবং করিতেছে ঐ কালেজের আর বিশেষ বৃত্তান্ত যদি জানিবার বাঞ্ছা হয় তবে কালেজের রিগুলেসন অর্থাৎ বিদ্যালয়ের ধারা সমাচারচন্দ্রিকায় প্রকাশ আছে তাহা পাঠ করিলেই জানিতে পারিবা। (p. 82).

Bhabānīcaraṇ Bandyopādhyāy was, no doubt, the most influential member of the so-called orthodox party, who upheld the traditions of the orthodox society irrespective of their merits or defects; but it must be said that in his present publication, he keeps a fairly open and balanced mind. He is generous enough to admit the usefulness of English education which was then gradually gaining ground in the country but which in the opinion of the narrow orthodoxy of the time was sapping the very foundations of the ancient faith and encouraging the pernicious habits of the young bloods of the time. On the other hand, Bhabānīcaraṇ satirises some of the weaknesses of the so-called orthodox party and does not miss an opportunity of making fun of them. Speaking of the Pūjā festival he says: দেখ এস্থলে যে সকল লোক দুর্গোৎসব করেন তাহাকে ঝাড় উৎসব, বাত্তি উৎসব, কবি উৎসব, বাই উৎসব, কিংবা স্ত্রীর গহনা উৎসব ও বস্ত্রোৎসব বলিলেও বলা যায়। (p. 11).[1] He gives an inimitable description of দলাদলি and alludes to four or five such parties in the orthodox society. As the institution is gradually vanishing from modern society, we reproduce below the author's description of a ceremony in which the দলপতি presides and his remarks on the duties of such দলপতি (pp. 49-52).

1 But elsewhere (p. 84) he gives an account of their patronage of music.

আপন দলের মধ্যে কোন ব্যক্তির বাটীতে কোন বৃহৎ কর্ম্ম অর্থাৎ পুরাণ আরাম্ভ (*sic*) সমাপনদিবসে এবং পিতৃমাতৃশ্রাদ্ধাদি কর্ম্ম উপস্থিত হইলে ঐ ব্যক্তি দলপতির নিকটে আসিয়া আপন বিষয় অবগত করান এবং আপন বিভবানুসারে ব্যয় করিবার ক্ষমতাও জানান তিনি সেই ব্যয়োপযুক্ত লোক নিমন্ত্রণ করিবার ফর্দ্ধ (*sic*) করিয়া দেন আপন দলের নৈক্যভাবাপন্ন কুলীনব্রাহ্মণ এত, ভঙ্গ কুলীন এত, অধ্যাপক এত, সেই ফর্দ্দপ্রমাণ নিমন্ত্রণ হয় পরে সিধা ও পত্র দেওয়ান তৎপরে কর্ম্মদিবসে নির্ণয়সময়ে নিমন্ত্রিতব্যক্তিসকলে দলপতির অনুমতি লইয়া কর্ম্মকর্ত্তার বাটীতে আগমন করেন দলপতি প্রায় সর্ব্বত্রই কিঞ্চিৎকাল বিলম্ব করিয়া গমন করিয়া থাকেন সকল লোক তাঁহার প্রতীক্ষা করিয়া সভায় বসিয়া কালযাপন করেন অধ্যাপকেরা সভাস্থ হইয়া পরস্পর নানাশাস্ত্রের বিচার করিতেছেন কুলজ্ঞ কুলীন মহাশয় সকল এবং কুলাচার্য্য সকল কুলজীর ব্যাখ্যা করিতেছেন গোষ্ঠীপতিকে বেষ্টিত করিয়া কুলীনসকল বসিয়াছেন ভট্টেরা কর্ম্মকর্ত্তার বংশাবলী ও পূর্ব্বপুরুষের এবং তাঁহার গুণ কীর্ত্তন করিতেছে ঐ সভাবাটীর দ্বারে দ্বারপালেরা হস্তপদাদি দ্বারা নিমন্ত্রিত ভিন্ন অন্য লোকের গমনাগমন বারণ করিতেছে এমত সময়ে অতি আত্মীয়-বন্ধুবান্ধব সমভিব্যাহারে ভূপতিতুল্যমর্য্যাদ দলপতি আসিয়া উপস্থিত হইলেন তৎকালে সভাস্থ সকলে গাত্রোত্থানপূর্ব্বক আসিতে আজ্ঞা হয়২ ইত্যাদি পূজ্যতাবোধক সম্বোধন বাক্যোচ্চারণপুরঃসর অভ্যর্থনা করেন তৎপরে দলপতি তন্মধ্যবর্ত্তি স্থানে পৃথক আসনে উপবিষ্ট হয়েন কিঞ্চিৎকাল বিলম্বে জিজ্ঞাসা করেন অমুক২ আসিয়াছেন ইত্যাদি, পরে কর্ম্মকর্ত্তা দলপতির নিকট আসিয়া গললগ্নীকৃতবাসা হইয়া নিবেদন করেন বেলা বা রাত্রি অধিক হইয়াছে অনুমতি হইলে সভাস্থ মহাশয়দিগ্যে মাল্যচন্দন অর্পন (*sic*) করা যায় দলপতি অনুমতি করেন গোষ্ঠীপতি অমুকের নিকট যাও, তাঁহার অনুমতি হয় পরে পরিচারক ব্রাহ্মণেরা চন্দনের বাটী পুষ্পমালা আনিয়া কহে অগ্রে চন্দন কাহাকে দেওয়া যাইবেক সে সময় প্রায় অনেক স্থানে বিরোধ হইয়া থাকে যেহেতু চন্দনের পাত্র গোষ্ঠীপতি হয়েন সে সভায় দুই তিনজন থাকিলেই সুতরাং বিরোধ হয় পরে দলপতি

বিরোধভঞ্জন করিয়া দেন অগ্রে গোষ্ঠীপতি চন্দন হইলে সভাস্থ ব্রাহ্মণের হয় তৎপরে দলপতির চন্দন হয় তৎপরে অগ্রপশ্চ (*sic*) বিবেচনা থাকে না একাদিক্রমেই মাল্যচন্দন হইয়া থাকে পরে সকলেই আপন আপন স্থানে প্রস্থান করেন অনন্তর যাঁহার সহিত যাঁহার আহার ব্যবহার থাকে তাঁহারা আহার করিয়া থাকেন পরে দলপতি মহাশয় উপযুক্ত পাত্র বিবেচনা করিয়া বিদায়ের অঙ্কপাত করিয়া দেন কর্ম্মকর্ত্তা তদনুসারে সম্মানপূর্ব্বক সকলকে দানাদি প্রদান করেন ইহাতে দলপতির যে লভ্য হয় তাহা আমি আর অধিক কি কহিব আপনিই বিবেচনা করুন।

At the same time there are occasional attacks on the somewhat reckless and incontinent lives led by "English-educated" Bengali youths of this period, the so-called reforming Young Bengal who regarded everything old and time-honoured as despicable. It is true that the conduct of some of the fresh products of the Hindu College was not above reproach and deserved the biting satire of works like *Kalikātā Kamalālay* and *Naba-bābu-bilās*, but it must be said to the credit of Bhabānīcaraṇ that he does not represent the somewhat extreme and one-sided views of his party and his remarks are not marked by the abusive bitterness which often defaced the periodical publications of the time. Here is a piece of good-natured banter on one of the weaknesses of the modern Babu who loves to collect a large library of well-bound volumes without ever turning over the page of a single book:

যে বাবু সকল নানাজাতীয় ভাষার উত্তমং গ্রন্থ অর্থাৎ পার্সি ইংরাজী আরবি কেতাব ক্রয় করিয়া কেহ এক কেহ বা দুই গেলাসওয়ালা আলমারির মধ্যে সুন্দর শ্রেণীপূর্ব্বক এমত সাজাইয়া রাখেন যে দোকানদারের বাপেও এমত সোনার হল করিয়া কেতাব সাজাইয়া রাখিতে পারেনা আর তাহাতে এমন যত্ন করেন একশত বৎসরেরও কেহ বোধ করিতে পারেন না যে এই কেতাবে কাহার হস্তস্পর্শ হইয়াছে। অন্য অপরের হস্ত দেওয়া দূরে থাকুক জেলদগর ভিন্ন বাবুও স্বয়ং কখন হস্ত দেন নাই। এবং কোন কালেও দিবেন এমত কথা শুনা যায় না……বাবুরা বুঝি

শুনিয়া থাকিবেন যে অধিক পুস্তক গৃহে রাখিলে সরস্বতী বদ্ধ থাকেন যেমন অধিক ধন আছে তাহার ব্যয় না করিলে লক্ষ্মী সুস্থির থাকেন ব্যয় করিলেই বিচলিত হয়েন ইহাও বুঝি তেমনি তেমনি কেতাব লইয়া আন্দোলন করিলে সরস্বতী বিরক্ত হয়েন তৎপ্রযুক্ত হস্তস্পর্শ তাহাতে করেন না।

The ostensible object of the work, however, is not satire but description, although Bhabānīcaraṇ had an undoubted gift of satirical writing. His descriptions of চাকরির উমেদার or of professional beggars (pp. 84-88) and sycophant (মোসাহেব) who hang upon the wealthy, exhibit the true picture of a certain type or class in every society, interesting to the student of the drama, novel or social history. More openly satirical are the two works *Naba-bābu-bilās*[1] (1825) and *Naba-bibi-bilās* (1831) which Bhabānīcharaṇ wrote under the assumed names of Pramatha Nāth Śarmā and Bholānāth Bandyopādhyāy respectively, which are really variations of his own name. The first work describes in prose and verse the unsavoury career of one Keśabchandra, rich, vicious and illiterate son of Totārām Datta. Rajendralal Mitra bears testimony to the fact that তৎকালে বর্ণিত বাবুর আদর্শ কলিকাতায় অপ্রাপ্য ছিল না; but the only considerable social satire on this topic was the বাবুর উপাখ্যান published in the *Samāchār Darpaṇ* in two parts (on Feb. 24 and June 9, 1821).[2] Bhabānīcharaṇ's work became the starting point of several satirical sketches of the same type, culminating in those of Tekchāṁd and Hutam. The *Naba-bibi-vilās* is also anonymously written in prose and verse, but it is a much inferior production both in taste and style. Its descriptive preface says:

নববিবিবিলাস অর্থাৎ কুলটাবর্ত্মে কুলকামিনীর দুঃখপ্রকাশ। যথা—

1 Published by Sajanikanta Das, with an introduction by Brajendra Nath Banerji (Ranjan Publishing House, Calcutta 1937). The work is in four parts entitled respectively Aṅkur, Pallab, Kusum and Phal, marking stages in the Rake's Progress!

2 It is reproduced in the introduction to the ed. of *Naba-bābu-vilās* mentioned above.

অগ্রে বেশ্যা পরে দাসী মধ্যে ভবতি কুট্টনী। সর্ব্বশেষে সর্ব্বনাশে সারং ভবতি টুকনী॥ এতদ্বৃত্তান্তমূলক বিস্তৃত গ্রন্থ। The author amplifies in the preface: যদ্যপি নববাবুবিলাসে নববাবুদিগের স্বভাব সুপ্রকাশ আছে, কিন্তু সে গ্রন্থে ফলখণ্ডে লিখিত ফলের প্রধান মূল বাবুদের বিবি; সেই বিবিরূপ প্রধান মূলের অঙ্কুরাবধি শেষ ফল সবিশেষ ব্যক্ত হয় নাই, এ নিমিত্তে তৎপ্রকাশে প্রয়াসপূর্ব্বক নববিবিবিলাস নামক এই গ্রন্থ রচনা করিলাম। As Rājendralāl Mitra puts it: ভদ্র স্ত্রী কুলটা হইলে যে দুর্গতি হয় তাহারই বর্ণনা করা তাহার অভিপ্রেত॥

Another satirical work in verse by Bhabānīcaraṇ is entitled *Dūtī-vilāsa* (দূতীবিলাস সুরসিক রসদায়ক পুস্তক, pp. viii+133).[1] On the title-page it bears the date, viz., Śaka 1747 = A.D. 1825, published at Calcutta, containing 12 illustrations. As the poem possesses little merit, and is disfigured by occasional grossness, it is not desirable to give here any detailed account of the work. We read in the বিবিধার্থ সংগ্রহ of 1858 (no. 60, পঞ্চম পর্ব্ব, Śaka 1780, p. 260): অতঃপর সুবিখ্যাত শ্রীভবানীচরণ বন্দ্যোপাধ্যায় কোন দোষী পরিবারের নিগঞ্জনার্থে দূতিবিলাস নামে একখানি কাব্য প্রস্তুত করেন। তাহাতে অন্যান্য বাঙ্গালী ব্যঙ্গ কাব্যের আদর্শে অনেক জঘন্য অশ্লীলতা আছে, অধিকন্তু তাহার কবিত্ব যৎসামান্যমাত্র।

GAURĪŚAṄKAR BHAṬṬĀCHĀRYA (1799-1859)

Gaurīśaṅkar (nicknamed Guḍguḍe গুড়গুড়ে) Bhaṭṭāchārya had some reputation as an irresponsible journalist who at a later stage of his career came into collision with Īśvar Chandra Gupta. Coming to Calcutta in 1849 he joined Rāmmohan Rāy, but soon became a free-lance author and journalist. He was born in Pañchagrām (পাঁচগাঁও) Sylhet in 1799, and died at Calcutta on Feb. 5, 1859. He is said to have studied Nyāya

1 There is a copy in the British Museum which we have seen; see Blumhardt, *Catalogue of Bengali Printed Books in the British Museum*, p. 10.

at Naihati (1826-27) and obtained the title of Tarkavāgīśa. When Dakṣiṇārañjan Mukhopādhyāy started the *Jñānāveṣaṇ* in June 18, 1831 Gaurīśaṅkar did its editorial work. He then became associated with the *Saṃbad-bhāskar*[1] which was published from Simla, Calcutta, in March 1839 with Śrīnāth Rāy as nominal editor. It was at first printed at the Bhaskar Press in the house of Aśutoṣ Deb (ছাতুবাবু), and then from Feb. 14, 1848 from Gaurīśaṅkar's own house at Sobhabazar, Calcutta. It was at first a weekly (every Tuesday), then a bi-weekly (from Jaunary 14, 1848; Tuesday and Friday), then a tri-weekly (from April 12, 1849; Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday). The name *Saṃbād-bhāskar* was probably suggested by the rival paper *Saṃbād-prabhākar* (first published in January 28, 1831) edited by Īśvar Chandra Gupta, between whom and Gaurīśaṅkar there grew up rivalry ultimately ripening into jealousy. Gaurīśaṅkar also conducted the *Saṃbād-rasarāj*, with Kālīkānta Gaṅgopādhyāy as the nominal editor, from Nov. 29, 1839 to Feb. 2, 1857. This paper, was at first a weekly (published every Friday) and then a bi-weekly (published every Tuesday and Friday). Like the *Saṃbād-bhāskar* it was a very slight print, each issue consisting of only four pages (two sheets), of which two were taken up entirely by advertisements and the remaining two by reading matter. In course of time it became a scurrilous print, and Gaurīśaṅkar suffered imprisonment twice for libel.[2]

Besides the Sanskrit texts of the *Bhagavad-gītā* (1835) and *Mārkandeya-chandī* (1858) with Bengali translation, Gaurīśaṅkar also published (i) *Bhūgol-sār*, an elementary school

1 Of some numbers of this paper, now in the British Museum, an account was given by the present writer in *Indian Historical Quarterly*, ii, 1926, pp. 55-57; 1927, pp. 21-24. See also Brajendra Nath Banerji, *Bāṅgālā Sāmayik Patra*, pp. 85-102.

2 Rajnarayan Basu writes about this: প্রভাকর ও রসরাজে যখন ঝগড়া হইত তখন রাস্তার দুইজন ময়লা পরিষ্কারক জাতীয় লোকে ঝগড়া করিয়া পরস্পরের হস্তিকাস্থিত ময়লা লইয়া পরস্পরের গাত্রে নিক্ষেপ করিলে যেরূপ দৃশ্য হয় সেইরূপ জঘন্য দৃশ্য হইত।

book of 60 pages compiled from English works on geography, (ii) *Pāk-rājeśvar* on the art of cooking (1843) and (iii) *Jñāna-pradīpa* in two parts (1840) and (1853) বালকদিগের শিক্ষার্থে বিবিধ নীতিবিষয়ক প্রস্তাব ও দৃষ্টান্ত সকল, which proceeds on the model of Indian fables like the *Pañcatantra*, and pretends to embody the teachings of one Hariharāchārya, who is requested by king Kailāsadeva to impart instruction to his wayward son Malaydeva.[1] Gaurīśaṅkar's Bengali diction[2] does not show much improvement upon those of his contemporaries. Here is a specimen:

কতকদূর গমনকরত অমরেশ্বর মহীপাল পরমেশ্বর স্মরণ পূর্ব্বক ক্ষণমাত্রে প্রেমসিন্ধুরাজার দেশে গমনার্থ আকাঙ্ক্ষা করিলেন তাহাতে ক্ষণকালে ছয়-মাসের পর ব্যবহিত প্রেমসিন্ধু নৃপতির অধিকারে শ্রীহট্টে উপস্থিত হইয়া দেখেন তথায় নানাপ্রকার দ্রব্যাদি ক্রয় বিক্রয় হইতেছে এবং এক ব্রাহ্মণ বহুতর দ্রব্যাদি ক্রয় করিয়া ভৃত্যের আগমন অপেক্ষা করিতেছেন অমরেশ্বর নৃপতি ভৃত্যের অভিপ্রায় জানিয়া তৎকালীন অতি কুরূপ নীচজাতীয় ক্ষিপ্তের ন্যায় রূপধারণ পূর্ব্বক ব্রাহ্মণের নিকট গেলেন তাহাতে ব্রাহ্মণ জিজ্ঞাসা করিলেন, ওরে, তুই কোন জাতি অনাচরণীয় ত নইস, রাজা উত্তর করিলেন, ঠাকুর মহাশয়, মুই কৈবর্ত্ত, লোকে মোকে পাগল বলে এই কারণ বিদেশে আইনু, আপনি কেন সুধাইতেছেন, ব্রাহ্মণ কহিলেন তুই পাগল তাহা পারিব (*sic*)

1 These moral stories were written by Gaurīsaṅkar himself for the *Saṃbād-bhāskar*. An idea of the themes, which are illustrated by the stories in the work, may be obtained by the following brief résumé of the contents of Pt. I (from the নির্ঘণ্টপত্র): বিদ্যাবিষয়ক। মিথ্যা-গুণের দৃষ্টান্ত। মিথ্যাকথনে দোষ। অঙ্গীকারপালনে নিত্যতা। শিশুকালে বালকসকলকে জ্ঞানীলোকের নিকট রাখিবার আবশ্যকতা। প্রিয়বাক্য কথনের আবশ্যকতা। অপ্রিয়বাক্যের নিন্দা। নির্দ্দোষ বাক্য কথনের প্রয়োজন। প্রণয়রক্ষার আবশ্যকতা। সকল বিষয়ের আরম্ভের পূর্ব্বে বিবেচনা। যুক্তি শাস্ত্র উভয়সিদ্ধ আচার ব্যবহার কর্ত্তব্য। অবাধ্যকে দমন করিতে বিবেচনা। উপকার করণের আবশ্যকতা।

2 On Gauriśaṅkar and his works see S. K. De in *IHQ*, 1927, pp. 21-24, where some more quotations are given.

সম্প্রতি আমার এই মোট্‌টা নিয়া সঙ্গে যাইতে পারিবি, আমি রাজপুরোহিত কল্য আমার পুত্রের অন্নপ্রাশন বিলক্ষণ আহার পাইবি। (Pt. I, p. 33.)

ISVAR CHANDRA GUPTA (1811-1858)

Īśvar Chandra Gupta, unlike his literary rival Gauriśaṅkar Tarkavāgīśa, hardly had any education in his early life. Siba Nath Sastri informs us:[1] বলিতে গেলে শিক্ষা যাহাকে বলে ঈশ্বরচন্দ্র তাহার কিছুই পান নাই; ইংরাজী শিক্ষা ত হইলই না, বাঙ্গলাও নিজে পড়িয়া যাহা শিখিলেন তাহাই একমাত্র সম্বল হইল। কিন্তু এই সম্বল লইয়াই তিনি অচিরকালের মধ্যে বাঙ্গালার সুকবি ও সুলেখকরূপে পরিচিত হইলেন। Son of Harinārāyaṇ Gupta, he was born of a Vaidya family at Kāṁchḍā-pāḍā near Calcutta on Friday, Phālgun 25, 1218 B. S. (=1811 A. D.). On his father's death in 1830, Īśvar Chandra came to live at Joḍāsāṁko, Calcutta, in his maternal uncle's house, and became intimate with Yogendra Mohan Ṭhākur, son of Nanda Kumār Ṭhākur of Pathuriā-ghāṭā. With his encouragement and assistance Iśvar Gupta published the *Saṃbād-prabhākar* on Friday, January 28, 1831 (=Magh 16, 1237) as a weekly paper, but it stopped publication from May 25, 1832 on the death of Yogendra Mohan. From August 10, 1836 (=Śrāvan 27, 1243) it was again published thrice weekly; subsequently it became a daily paper from June 14, 1839 (Āṣāḍh 1, 1246).[2] On Iśvar Gupta's death, which occurred on January 23, 1859 (=Magh 10, 1265

1 শিবনাথ শাস্ত্রী, রামতনু লাহিড়ী ও তৎকালীন বঙ্গসমাজ, ২য় সং পৃঃ ২২৯।

2 From Baiśākh 1260 (=1853 A.D.) a monthly edition of a some bulk was published, containing prose and verse compositions of Īśvar Gupta himself. The account of Bhāratchandra collected by himself was published in it on Jyaiṣtha 1, 1262 (A little later the same year the account was published separately as কবিবর ৺ভারতচন্দ্র রায় গুণাকরের জীবনবৃত্তান্ত, কলিকাতা ১২৬২ (=1855). The accounts of the other poets (especially the Kabiwālās) and their compositions were published chiefly between 1853-55. In the monthly *Prabhākar* of Pauṣ 1, 1260 was

B. S.) his younger brother Rāmchandra Gupta became the editor. Īśvar Gupta also edited the weekly *Saṃbād-ratnābalī* published by Jagannāth Prasād Mallick, zamindar of Āndul, on July 24, 1832 (=Śrābaṇ 10, 1239 B. S.), till the paper was discontinued after a year and eight months. On June 20, 1846 (=Āṣāḍh 7, 1253) Īśvar Gupta published from the Prabhakar Press the weekly *Pāṣaṇḍa-pīḍan*. It was continued till August-September 1857, when it was replaced by the weekly *Saṃbād-sādhurañjan*, which appeared every Monday. This weekly appears to have continued for about a year till April 1860 even after Īśvar Gupta's death.

It will be seen from this short sketch that the career of Īśvarchandra Gupta was chiefly that of a journalist; and in this capacity his output of verse (with nominal introductory prose) in the journals he published was enormous On this point Baṅkimchandra remarks: ঈশ্বরগুপ্ত যত পদ্য লিখিয়াছেন এত আর কোন বাঙ্গালী লেখে নাই। গোপালবাবুর অনুমান[1], তিনি প্রায় পঞ্চাশ হাজার পদ্য লিখিয়াছেন। Most of these were of an ephemeral journalistic kind and have not survived, but we have enough to testify to his assiduity. Although for a time Īśvar Gupta was a member of the Tattvabodhinī Sabhā and was connected with the Ādi Brāhma Samāj, his attitude was that of a staunch conservative Hindu. With considerable misgiving he viewed the missionary activities of Alexander Duff[2] who had, with the help of Rāmmohan Rāy, opened a

published an account of Rāmprasād Sen and his works. All these works will be found conveniently in ঈশ্বরচন্দ্র গুপ্ত রচিত কবিজীবনী ed. Bhabatosh Datta, Calcutta Book House, 1365 B. S.(=1958 A.D.)

1 Gopāl Chandra Mukhopādhyāy was for some time editor of *Saṃbad-prabhākar*.

2 Alexander Duff of the Scottish Mission came out to Calcutta, accompanied by his wife, on May 27, 1830. He ultimately selected Cornwallis Square as the centre of his activity, where he set up the General Assembly's Institution, which subsequently became the Scottish Churches College. Lal Behari Dey, who was converted by Duff writes in his *Recollections of Alexander Duff* (p. 45): "His clief object in

school in the Brahma Sabhā premises on the Chitpur Road on July 13, 1830. Later on in 1843 the school was removed to Cornwallis Square by the side of the Hedua Tank. Speaking of the forward mentality of the boys of this school on the New Years' Day, Īśvar Gupta writes:

এ. বি. পড়া 'ডবি' ছেলে প্রতি ঘরে ঘরে।
সাজায়েছে গাদা-গাদা ডেক্সের উপরে ॥···
যা থাকে কপালে ভাই টেবিলেতে খাব।
ডুবিয়া 'ডবের' টবে চ্যাপেলেতে যাব ॥

And one need not, therefore, wonder at his bitter personal attack (which was nevertheless true) of Duff (ছদ্ম মিশনরী):

হেঁদো বনে কেঁদো বাঘ রাঙা মুখ যার।
বাপ্-বাপ্ বুক ফাটে নাম শুনে তার ॥···
কহিতে মনের খেদ বুক ফেটে যায়।
মিশনরী ছেলেধরা ছেলে ধরে খায় ॥···
বিদ্যাদান ছল করি মিশনরী ডব।
পাতিয়াছে ভাল এক বিধর্ম্মের টব ॥
মধুর বচন ঝাড়ে জানাইয়া 'লব'।
যীশুমন্ত্রে অভিষিক্ত করে শিশু সব ॥
শিশু সবে ত্রাণকর্ত্তা জ্ঞান করে ডবে।
বিপরীত লবে প'ড়ে ডুব দেয় টবে ॥

Although Īśvar Gupta supported Īśvar Chandra Bidyāsāgar in his agitation against kulinism and polygamy (*Prabhākar*, Baiśakh 8, 1272=1865 A. D.), yet (like Dāśarathi Rāy[1]) he did not approve of Bidyāsāgar's move for remarriage of

setting up this institution was to instruct Hindu youths in the principles of the Christian religion." See also S. K. De, পাদরী আলেকজান্দার ডাফ, in কথাসাহিত্য (কার্ত্তিক ১৩৬১) pp. 29-33.

1 ঈশ্বরগুপ্ত অলপ্পেয়ে, নারীর রোগ চেনে না বৈদ্য হয়ে।
হাতুড়ে বৈদ্যেতে যেন বিষ দেয় প্রাণে বধি ॥
(পাঁচালী, ২য় খণ্ড, কলিকাতা ১৯০১, পৃঃ ১৯৫৯)

Hindu widows. He was himself not averse to occasional drinking but he deprecated the habit as poisonous:

ছড়িয়ে ঘরের কড়ি ঢেলে দাও গলে।
দেখো দেখো লোকে যেন মাতাল না বলে॥
তবে তুমি পাত্র নও পাত্র যদি হও।
ছুঁয়ো না বিষের পাত্র পাত্র যদি নও॥

Of Īśvar Gupta's sustained and systematic works we have three, namely *Prabodh-prabhākar* (1857) *Hita-prabhākar* (1860) and *Bodhendu-vikāsa* (1893), with the fragment of a dramatic attempt entitled *Kali-nāṭak*, all of which are written in prose and verse. Only part i of the first work[1] (part ii never appeared) was published during the life-time of the author on Chaitra 1, 1264 B. S. (=1857 A. D.). The work is unnecessarily lengthy, because whatever is said in prose is set forth again in verse. In the form of a dialogue between father and son the work discusses the philosophical theme of attainment of happiness by means of true knowledge (তত্ত্বজ্ঞান), and absolute cessation of sorrow (আত্যন্তিকী দুঃখনিবৃত্তি). In the *Hita-prabhākar*[2] 'which expands and embellish the story of the *Hitopadeśa*, the extent of verse is greater than prose. It was published on Chaitra 11, 1267 B.S. (=1860) by Īśvar Gupta's younger brother Rāmchandra Gupta who had become editor of the *Saṃbād-prabhākar*. The *Bodhendu-*

1 ঈশ্বরো জয়তি।'/প্রবোধ প্রভাকর।'/প্রথম খণ্ড।'/জ্ঞানগুরু সর্ব্বশাস্ত্রজ্ঞ/শ্রীযুত পদ্মলোচন ন্যায়রত্ন ভট্টাচার্য্য মহাশয়ের কৃপায়/সংবাদ প্রভাকর সম্পাদক'/শ্রীঈশ্বরচন্দ্র গুপ্ত কর্ত্তৃক বিরচিত হইয়া'/কলিকাতা।'/প্রভাকর যন্ত্রে মুদ্রিত হইল।'/সিমুলিয়া অন্তঃপাতি হোগলকুঁড়িয়ার দুর্গাচরণ/, মিত্রের ষ্ট্রীট ৪২ নম্বর ভবন।'/১ চৈত্র ১২৬৪। On the front fly-leaf: Printed and Published by/ Issur Chunder Goopto,/ At the Probhakur Press.

2 Hit Probhakur./ by the late/ Baboo Issur Chunder Goopto./ হিত-প্রভাকর'/সংবাদ প্রভাকর সম্পাদক'/শ্রীরামচন্দ্র গুপ্ত কর্ত্তৃক প্রকাশিত হইয়া'/কলিকাতা।'/প্রভাকর যন্ত্রে মুদ্রিত হইল।'/সিমুলিয়ার অন্তঃপাতি হোগলকুঁড়িয়ার দুর্গাচরণ'/মিত্রের ষ্ট্রীট ৪২নং ভবনে।'/১১ চৈত্র ১২৬৭। (=1860 A.D.).

vikāsa which, as its name indicates, is an adaptation, in prose and verse, of Kṛṣṇamiśra's highly philosophical Sanskrit drama *Probodha-candrodaya*,[1] was also published by Rāmchandra Gupta. It presents an extensive philosophical allegory, in the form of a drama in six acts, of the whole life of man, cast in the form of a dramatic strife between the forces of the human mind which lead to true knowledge and those that are opposed to them. Of Īśvar Gupta's innumerable smaller poems a selection was published also by Rāmchandra Gupta[2]; but better known selections are: (1) ঈশ্বরচন্দ্র গুপ্তের কবিতা সংগ্রহ কলিকাতা ১২৯২-৯৩ (Calcutta 1885-86) ed. with a life of the poet and appreciation by Baṅkim Chandra Chaṭṭopādhyāy (2) ঈশ্বরচন্দ্র গুপ্তের গ্রন্থাবলী কলিকাতা (বসুমতী কার্য্যালয়) ১৩০৬ (=1900 A.D.) ed. Kāliprasanna Vidyāratna, pp. vi + 170. Also in two parts, pt. i, ed. Kalīprasanna Bidyāratna, Calcutta 1308 (pp. iv + 137), pt. ii. Calcutta 1320 (p. 70), with life and appreciation by Baṅkimchandra. (3) গ্রন্থাবলী ৺ঈশ্বরচন্দ্র গুপ্ত প্রণীত with Baṅkimchandra's appreciation (as above), ed. Manindra Kṛṣṇa Gupta, in 2 vols. Gurudas Chatterji: Calcutta 1308 B.S. (=1901 A.D.), which contains also the *Bodhendu-vikās*.

In his diction and versification Īśwar Gupta was considerably influenced by Bhāratchandra, but he lacked Bharatchandra's gift of poetic expression. That he was a fluent and facile versifier admits of no doubt. Besides the usual Payār, Tripadī, Chaupadī and Ekāvalī he employs what he calls

1 বোধেন্দু বিকাস নাটক।/প্রবোধচন্দ্রোদয় নাটকের অনুরূপ।/অর্থাৎ/স্বভাবানুযায়ি বর্ণন।/মহাকবি ৺ঈশ্বরচন্দ্র গুপ্ত প্রণীত।/ Published by Rāmchandra Gupta, Calcutta 1270 B.S. (= 1863 A.D.). For the original Sanskrit work of Kṛṣṇa Miśra see S. K. De, *Hist of Sanskrit Lit.* (Calcutta 1947), pp. 481-84.

2 ঈশ্বরো জয়তি।/মহাকবি/৺ঈশ্বরচন্দ্র গুপ্ত মহাশয়ের/বিরচিত কবিতা-বলীর/সার সংগ্রহ/প্রথম ভাগ/প্রথম সংখ্যা/সংবাদ প্রভাকর সম্পাদক শ্রীরামচন্দ্র গুপ্তের দ্বারা/সংগৃহীত হইয়া/কলিকাতা।/সংবাদ প্রভাকর যন্ত্রে মুদ্রিত/(no. date).

Candrāvalī, Bīrarañjanī, Bilāpinī, Rektā (Mātrācchanda), Bilāsinī, Śoka-taraṅgiṇī and Gauraveṇī; but those metres, obtained by permutation and combination, do not appear too have become current. Īśvar Gupta wrote too copiously to write well, but his journalistic diction was adequate for his pedestrian verses. His prose which appears frequently is highly stilted and artificial. Here is a specimen from his *Hita-prabhākar* (p. 16):

ওরে মন! এই অনিত্য ভূতের ব্যাপারে জড়ীভূত হইয়া কেন অভিভূত হোস্? সেই নিত্য অতি অদ্ভুত ভূতাতীত ভূতের কর্ত্তা ভূতনাথকে একবার দেখ-রে, একবার দেখ-রে। আবার এই শ্রবণ সতত শুদ্ধ অসাধুশব্দই শ্রবণ করিয়াছে, তাহাতেই উৎসুক হইয়াছে। সুধাময়-সাধুশব্দ বিষবোধ করিয়াছে,—যখন কোনো সাধু-ভক্ত অনুরক্ত-পুরুষ বাহ্যজ্ঞানবিহীন হইয়া প্রেমাশ্রুপাত করিতে করিতে তোমার গুণসংকীর্ত্তন করিয়াছেন, তখন তচ্ছ্রবণে পুলকিত হইয়া এমত বলে নাই।—"মন্ রে, মন্ রে, শোন-রে, শোন-রে, এই সাধু কি মধুর গীত গাহিতেছে?—ও মন! এই সাধক সাধুর সঙ্গি হইয়া ব্রহ্মকথা বল্-রে বল্-রে। ও মন ব্রহ্মরসে গল্ রে, গল্ রে, গল্ রে! ......ও চিত্ত! এই লৌকিক সামান্য রস রাখ-রে—রাখ-রে; তাঁর প্রেমরস চাক-রে—চাক-রে—চাক-রে; তাঁর ভক্তিরস মাখ্-রে—মাখ্-রে—মাখ্-রে; ও মন! তাঁরে ডাক-রে—ডাক-রে—ডাক-রে।

His diction in verse, however, is much simpler and less affected (হিংসার উক্তি from *Bodhendu-vikās*, গৌরবিণীচ্ছন্দ):

হাদে দেখি ঘরে ঘরে, সকলেই খায় পরে, সুখে আছে পরস্পরে—
আজো এরা মরেনি?
কত সাজে সাজ করে, গরবেতে ফেটে মরে, এখনো এদের ঘরে—
যম এসে ধরেনি?
এই সব জামাজোড়া, এই সব গাড়ীঘোড়া, এ সব টাকার তোড়া—
চোরে কেন হরেনি?
আরে, ওরা ভাগ্যবান্, বাড়িয়াছে বড় মান, গোলাভরা আছে ধান—
লক্ষ্মী আজো সরেনি?

মর্ এটা যেন হাতি, দশ হাত বুকে ছাতি, করিতেছে মাতামাতি—
জরে কেন জরেনি ?
হাদে মাগী কালামুখী, ঠিক যেন কচি খুকী, পতিসুখে বড় সুখী—
ঠেঁটী কেন পরেনি ?
মর্ মর্ ওই ছুঁড়ী, পরেছে সোনার চুড়ী, বেঁকে চলে মেরে তুড়ি—
ফুল তবু ঝরেনি !
দেখ্ দেখ্ নিয়ে মিঠে, খেতেছে কি পুলিপিঠে, এখনো এদের ভিটে—
ঘুঘু কেন চরেনি !

But the best specimens of Īśwar Gupta's satirical writing are to be found in those shorter poems in which he describes with considerable realism the ordinary scenes, objects and incidents of the daily life of the middle-class Bengali of his time. As we have said elsewhere[1]: তাঁহার ব্যঙ্গ-কবিতার বিষয়বস্তু ছিল মুখ্যতঃ সাধারণ মানুষ—'রঙ্গভরা বঙ্গদেশের' সাধারণ বাঙালী। দেবদেবীর মাহাত্ম্য নয়, কোন অসাধারণ ঘটনা বা চরিত্র নয়, 'পৌষপার্ব্বণ', 'তপ্‌সে মাছ', 'পাঁঠা', 'আনারস', 'বড়দিন' প্রভৃতি দৈনন্দিন বাঙালী জীবনের অকিঞ্চিৎকর বস্তু বা ব্যাপার সাহিত্যের বর্ণনীয় বিষয়ের মর্য্যাদা লাভ করিয়াছিল। In these poems he discarded, on the one hand, the heavy Sanskritised diction and the colloquial speech on the other, and wrote simply and effectively lines like the following:

বধূর মধুর খনি মুখ-শতদল।
সলিলে ভাসিয়া যায় চক্ষু ছল্-ছল্॥

Baṅkimchandra has praised Īśvar Gupta's poetry, but at the same time he has said: এরূপ কবি আর জন্মিয়া কাজ নাই। He realised quite correctly that with the change of taste and style of the new age the days of such poetry were over.

1 দীনবন্ধু মিত্র p. 17.

CHAPTER V

WRITERS OF THE PERIOD OF TRANSITION

1. KṚṢNAMOHAN BANDYOPĀDHYĀY (1813-1885)

Of the students of the Hindu College, who in later times became leading men of their generation, the name of Kṛṣṇamohan Badyopādhyāya, both in chronology and importance, stands foremost. Although early in life he came under the influence of Alexander Duff, and as a convert to Christianity directed movements against Hinduism, he was yet connected with many of the popular movements of his time; and by his learning and character this forceful and patriotic person established a reputation which was much above religious sectarianism and which has made his name memorable to-day as one of the leaders of the thought and action of his generation.[1]

Kṛṣṇamohan was born of a poor Brahman family on May 24, 1813 in the house of his maternal grandfather Rāmjay Chaṭṭopādhyāy, which was situated near Bechu Chatterji Street and Guruprasad Chaudhuri Lane in Calcutta. His father Jīban Kṛṣṇa Bandyopādhyāy originally belonged to the village Nabagrām,[2] near Bāruipur, in the 24 Pergannas; but having married Rāmjay's second daughter Śrīmatī he came and lived in the house of his father-in-law. The Brahman-Pandit Rāmjay became what was called a Sabhā-Paṇḍit to Jaykṛṣṇa Siṃha of Joḍāsāṃko, grandfather of Kālī Prasanna Siṃha, but his pecuniary circumstances were greatly straightened. In 1819 at the age of six Kṛṣṇamohan was admitted into the

1 For a detailed account of Kṛṣṇamohan and his work, see the present writer's article in *Śāradīyā Ānandabāzār Patrikā*, 1362, pp. 183-192.

2 H. Das (*Bengal Past and Present*, vol. xxvii, 1929, p. 134) says that it was Dakṣineśvar.

Central Vernacular School established by the School Society at Kālitalā.[1] The two secretaries of the Society were David Hare and Rādhākānta Deb; but the school in question was run entirely at the expense of David Hare. Having perceived the intelligence of the boy. Hare took him to his newly established (1822) Paṭaldāṅgā School, and then as a free student to the Hindu College in Feb. 1824 for higher education.[2] Recalling this with gratefulness Kṛṣṇamohan said at the Hare Memorial Meeting on June 1, 1849: "At the age of six I became his boy—an honour which I continued to enjoy as any other friend now present in this hall."

It was about this time three movements were coming into prominence. We have, on the one hand, the newly trained young Bengal of the Hindu College who, with their uncompromising modernity, were impatient of all conventional restraints. On the other hand, the Dharma-sabhā of the conservative Hindu society, under the leadership of Bhabāni Charaṇ Bandyopādhyāy and Rādhākānta Deb, was resolutely opposed to all change. Midway between these two opposing forces stood the small group who, following Rāmmohan Rāy generally and Debendra Nāth Ṭhākur in particular, wanted reform by a reasonable synthesis. Like most young men of his time, Kṛṣṇamohan was as much opposed to the conservative attitude of the Hindu leaders as to the aggressive proselytising zeal of the Christian missionaries; but he did not ally himself with Debendranāth's group.

Kṛṣṇamohan was not a direct pupil of Derozio, for he had

1 "It was at the Central Vernacular School of the late School Society, of which he (Rādhākānta Deb) was secretary conjointly with Mr. David Hare that I received my early education." (Speech at the Memorial Meeting on Rājā Rādhākānta Deb, May 14, 1867).

2 Peary Chand Mittra, *Biographical Sketch of David Hare*, Calcutta 1877, p. 51. Along with the Ārpuli Pāṭhśālā, the expenses of which were borne by Hare, there was the Paṭaldāṅgā School established by the School Society for teaching English. These two schools were amalgamated later into the Hare School, which name was given in 1865.

left college before the Academic Associatian was established in 1829 under Derozio's leadership. But he could not avoid altogether the influence of Derozio[1] whom he used to meet at his house. Along with students of the College Kṛṣṇamohan was at his bedside on his untimely death on Dec. 26, 1831; and the memorial meeting at the Parental Academy was arranged chiefly through Kṛṣṇamohan's efforts.

But as yet the Young Bengal had no periodical paper of their own. In 1831 Prasanna Kumār Ṭhākur started the *Reformer* which, as its name implies, had reform as its object; but it was never its aim to make a comprehensive attack on objectionable social and religious practices. Kṛṣṇamohan accordingly started a weekly called the *Enquirer*[2] on May 17, 1831. In the first issue it was stated with a flourish: "Having thus launched our task under the denomination of Enquirer, we set sail in quest of truth and happiness"! Not only in his writings but actually in practice Kṛṣṇamohan did not, like most young Bengal, conform to social and religious restrictions, especially with regard to taking what was regarded as unclean food.[3] In youthful but ill-advised frolic[4] he threw one night a piece of beaf into the adjoining house of a Hindu neighbour named Bhairab Chandra Chakravarti. The leaders of society of the area ordered *prāyaścitta* for this sacrilege. But Kṛṣṇamohan, declining to do it, had to leave his home. Refused admission into any Hindu house, he had to

1 On the influence of Derozio's teaching Peary Chand writes: "Some were impressed with the excellence of justice, some with the paramount importance of truth, some with patriotism, some with philanthropy".

2 Its last number was published on June 19, 1834.

3 Some students of Hindu College like Rādhānāth Sikdār considered beaf-eating as an indication of freedom from prejudice. Iśvar Gupta ridiculed this habit thus: খাবার জিনিস অনেক আছে তাই দিয়ে যা, চলুক খানা। ওমা এমন ত নয় গরুর মাংস না খেলে প্রাণ বাঁচে না॥

4 The incident occurred, according to Lal Behari Dey, in August 1831. Peary Chand Mittra in his *Biographical Sketch of David Hare* (Calcutta 1877, p. 281) confirms this.

seek shelter in the house of a European friend; but this separation of his relations at the outset of his life upset him very much. He characterised this persecution as the result at "the bigot's rage and the fanatic's fulminations." He published in November 1831 a drama in five acts called the *Persecuted*[1] in which he ridiculed the hypocrisy and bigotry of orthodox society.[2] It is not a real drama but, as the author himself describes it, a series of dramatic scenes bound together by the slender narrative of a typical Young Bengal named Bāṇīlāl. It is curious that in more than one scene are depicted two Brahmaṇ-Paṇḍits of the Guru-purohit class, named Tarkālaṃkār and Bidyābāgīś, secretly addicted to drinking and complacently declaring: "The Brahmin is a blessed name! He tramples upon the very persons whose bounty feeds him. May things remain for ever as they are now, and may we thus subsist upon the clever tricks we play, and the frauds we practise upon the Hindus!" That this picture is not exaggerated we learn from Tekchāṁd's *Māsīk Patrikā* (no. 4 Nov. 15; no. 5, Dec. 15, 1854).[3] Among educated youths, there were those who, like Bāṇīlāl considered themselves "Hindus liberated from the shakles of prejudice."

1 The litle-page states: The Persecuted/ or/ Dramatic Scenes,/ illustrative of the Present state of Hindoo Society,/ in Calcutta./ By/ Babu Krishna Mohan Banerjee./ Calcutta./ Printed for the Author, and Printed at Messrs. A. Moreiro and Co's./ East India Press, No. 18, Loll Bazar./ 1831. pp. 4+34+3. A detailed analysis of this rare work scene by scene will be found in an article by the present author in *Śanibārer Chiṭhi*, Kārtik 1362 (vol. 28, no. 1), pp. 1-7.

2 Lal Behary Dey (*Recollection of Alexander Duff* London 1879, p. 34) says; "Deeming the columns of his paper not wide enough for the exercise of his satirical powers, he published a drama, which he named 'the Persecuted', and in which he showed, with much wit and sarcasm, that those members of the Hindu Community who passed for orthodox were in reality hypocrites, and that, in truth, there was no such thing as caste."

3 These .have been reproduced in the author's মদ খাওয়া বড় দায়। *viz.* জাতি মারিবার মন্ত্রণা (no. 4) and জাতিরক্ষার্থ সভা (no. 5).

There were others who, like Bhairab; believed in reform but were not in favour of openly antagonising society. In the older social order there were some, like Kāmadeva, whose outward piety was meant to cover a multitude of sin.

Kṛṣṇamohan's other work was an essay on women's education,[1] which he advocates as a means of their emancipation from the slavery of the household and ministration into the "carnal gratification to their husbands." The attitude is essentially that of a Christian Missionary, which saw nothing good in the existing social order of the Hindus.

It was about this time that the Christian Missionaries of Calcutta availed themselves of the growing unrest of the Young Bengal and arranged a series of lectures on Christianity at Duff's house at College Square, nearly opposite the Hindu College. Only one lecture was delivered; but it led to Kṛṣṇamohan's acquaintance with Archdeacon Thomas Dealtry (1786-1861) and Alexander Duff (1806-1878) October 17, 1832 Kṛṣṇamohan became converted to Christianity by Duff;[2] but since he could not reconcile himself with the views of the Scottish Church he ultimately went over to the Church of England.[3]

Kṛṣṇamohan became a teacher in the Paṭaldāṅgā School of David Hare after he left college, but he had to resign his

1 A Prize Essay on Native Female Education by the Rev. K. M. Banerjee, Minister of Christ Church, Cornwallis Square. Calcutta. Bishop's College Press. Ostell and Lepage, British Library 1851, pp. xi+154.—An analysis of this work will be found in the issue of the *Śanibārer Chiṭhi* referred to above, pp. 8-10. Peary Chand Mittra (*A Few Desultory Remarks on the Cursory Review of the Institutions of Hinduism affecting the interest of the Female Sex contained in the Rev. K. M. Banerjee's Essay on Native Female Education*) shews that most of Kṛṣṇamohan's views about Hindu women are erroneous.

2 Duff has given his own account of the incident in his *India and India Missions*, Edinburgh 1839, pp. 652-54. Duff left India in 1863.

3 There was some controversy on his change of view in the *India Review*.

post after conversion into Christianity. In 1833 (tell 1836) he became Superintendent of the English School of the Church Missionary Society. About this time (1833) a complaint was lodged against him at the Supreme Court before Justice Sir Edward Ryan for having enticed away a boy of the Chaibasa School (Chotanagpur) named Brajanath Ghosh from his father's house with the object of converting him into Christianity.[1] On the court's judgment he had to return the boy, but the incident earned for him the nickname ঘর-মজানো কেষ্টো ! Kṛṣṇamohan left Calcutta for the Upper Provinces ; but coming back in 1835 he availed himself of the help of the district magistrate (J. H. Paton) to make his wife leave her father's home and be converted into Christianity.

When he was a student in the Hindu College Kṛṣṇamohan had already learnt Sanskrit in the Sanskrit College. In 1836 Kṛṣṇamohan obtained a scholarship in the Bishop's College and studied Christian theology, as well as Greek, Latin, and Hebrew.

On June 2, 1837 he was made a deacon of the Church attached to the Bishop's College. A church called Christ Church was built for him on the south-west corner of the Cornwallis Square, where he preached, always in Bengali, from September 27, 1839 for thirteen years till 1852. Twelve of his sermons were printed in May 1840 under the title *Upadeśa-kathā*.[2] In 1842 he published a Catecism in Bengali,

1 Brajendranath Banerjee, *Saṃbādpatre Sekāler Kathā*, pp. ii (Calcutta 1933), pp. 173. Later on he converted Jñānendra Mohan, only son of Prasanna Kumār Ṭhākur, on July 10, 1859. Jñānendra Mohan married Kṛṣṇamohan's eldest daughter Kamalmaṇi.

2 সত্যধর্ম্মসম্বন্ধীয়/বিবিধ প্রস্তাবে প্রচারিতা/উপদেশ কথা/গৌড়ীয়ভাষয়া শ্রীকৃষ্ণমোহন বন্দ্যোপাধ্যায়েন ভগবৎ খ্রীষ্টমন্দিরস্য/ পুরোহিতেন রচিতাঃ/ অধ্যক্ষস্য পাঠশালায়া যন্ত্রে মুদ্রাঙ্কিতা/ অষ্টেলাদিভিঃ (Ostell) পুস্তকবিক্রেতৃভি-বিক্রীতাঃ স্যুঃ/ pp. vi+212+2. In the preface we are told that the publication was necessitated by the Vedāntic works of Rāmmohan Rāy and the

entitled *Tattva-jijñāsuder Śikṣārtha Praśnottar* ; a sermon preached in 1847, called *Dharma-poṣak Baktṛtā*, and a small pamphlet, the explanatory title of which will sufficiently indicate its scope and object[1]: সত্যস্থাপন ও মিথ্যানাশক/, অর্থাৎ/, মিয়ুর সাহেবের রচিত মতপরীক্ষা নামক নামক গ্রন্থের/, শ্রীযুক্ত হরচন্দ্র তর্কপঞ্চানন দ্বারা/, যে উত্তর প্রকাশ হইয়াছিল তাহার/, এবং শ্রীযুৎ কাশীনাথ বসুর প্রত্যুত্তর ॥/. 1841, pp xvi+34. Tarkapañcānan's pamphlet having been written in Sanskrit had restricted circulation, but Kāśīnāth Basu of Bagbazar wrote in Bengali and in immoderate language which provoked a reply.

BIDYĀKALPADRUM

From 1846 to 1851 was published in thirteen volumes, on the diglot plan, with English and Bengali[2] on opposite pages, his extensive compendium called *Encyclopaedia Bengalensis* or *Bidyā-kalpadrum*[3], in which his object was to compile and digest exerting knowledge on various subjects. The foieword (মঙ্গলাচরণ) of the first volume tells us: গৌড়ীয় ভাষাতে

activities of the Tattvabodhinī Sabhā. This Sabhā started an agitation against the establishment of free schools by the missionaries as a centre for the spread of Christianity. The leaders of Hindu society, headed by Debendranāth Ṭhākur and Rādhākānta Deb, started a counter-movement and established the Hindu-hitārthī Bidyālay on March 1, 1846 (see *Autobiography* of Debendranāth pp. 52-56), of which Debendranāth was secretary and Rādhākānta Deb president. Later on in 1848, this agitation gained ground when Kailas Chandra Basu, a teacher and Gurucharan Sinha, student, both of the Hindu College, were converted into Christianity.

1 The English title-page is as follows: Truth defended and Error exposed./ Strictures upon Hara/ Chandra Tarkapañchanan's Answer to/ Mr. Muir's Mataparikshа,/ and upon Babu Kashinatha Basu's Tract/ on Hinduism and Christianity/ by the Rev. K. M. Banerjee,/ Minister of Christ Church, Cornwallis Square,/ Calcutta. Printed at Bishop's College Press: / Ostell and Lepage, British Library/ 1841.

2 They were also published only in Bengali.

3 বিদ্যাকল্পদ্রুম /, অর্থাৎ বিবিধ বিষয়কর রচনা /, শ্রীকৃষ্ণমোহন বন্দ্যোপাধ্যায় দ্বারা সংগৃহীত ।/,

ইউরোপীয় পুরাবৃত্ত ও দর্শনাদি শাস্ত্রের বর্ণনা করা বহুদিবসাবধি আমার অভিপ্রেত ছিল। বাল্যাবস্থাবধি আমার বাসনা ছিল যে স্বদেশীয়বর্গের সুশীলতা বৃদ্ধির নিমিত্ত যত্ন করিব। পরে খ্রীষ্টীয় ধর্ম্মের অবলম্বনে সে বাসনা আরও দৃঢ় ও পবিত্রীকৃত হয়।··· তাহাতে বিষাদপূর্ব্বক বুঝিলাম যে পুরাবৃত্ত ও যথার্থ ঘটনায় অনভিজ্ঞতাপ্রযুক্ত সত্য পথে লোকের বুদ্ধি চেষ্টায় এমত ব্যাঘাত জন্মিতেছে যে মিথ্যাজ্ঞানের শৃঙ্খল হইতে কোনক্রমে মুক্ত হইতে পারে না। বঙ্গভূমির মধ্যে সাধারণের মতিভ্রম নিবারণার্থে গৌড়ীয় ভাষাতে পুরাবৃত্ত ও পদার্থবিদ্যার অনুবাদ এক উত্তম উপায় বোধ হইতেছে। কিন্তু এই প্রকারে গৌড়ীয় ভাষাতে ইউরোপীয় বিদ্যার অনুবাদ যত বাঞ্ছনীয় তত সহজ নহে। এতএব অসাধ্যজ্ঞান করিয়া অনেকদিন পর্য্যন্ত বিরত ছিলাম। কিন্তু সম্প্রতি বেঙ্গল গবর্ণমেণ্ট সমীপে উৎসাহ পাইয়া[1] উক্ত অনুবাদের প্রতিজ্ঞাতে পুনশ্চ প্রবৃত্ত হইয়া পরমেশ্বরের প্রসাদে নির্ভর রাখিয়া ইউরোপীয় পুরাবৃত্ত পদার্থবিদ্যা ক্ষেত্রপরিমাপ জ্যোতিষাদি শাস্ত্র স্বদেশীয় ভাষাতে বিস্তারপূর্ব্বক পশ্চিম খণ্ডের জ্ঞান পূর্ব্ব খণ্ডে স্থাপন করিতে চেষ্টিত হইয়াছি। যে ২ গ্রন্থ আমি রচনা করিতে প্রবৃত্ত আছি তাহা উক্ত বিষয়ক কোন বিশেষ পুস্তক হইতে অনুবাদ না করিয়া বরং নানা মূল হইতে সংগ্রহ করিতে কল্পনা করিতেছি।··· আমার অভিপ্রায় এই যে··· সকলের সুবোধক কথা ব্যবহার করিব, তথাচ রচনার মাধুর্য্য দর্শাইয়া মনোরঞ্জক শিক্ষা বিস্তারে ক্রটি করিব না।··· জ্যোতিষ পদার্থ ও নীতিবিদ্যাতে অনেক পারিভাষিক শব্দ ও তর্ক আছে, এজন্য তাহা অবশ্য কিঞ্চিৎ কঠিন হইবে; কিন্তু ব্যাখ্যা ও টীকা দ্বারা সহজ করিতে যত্ন করিব।"

The thirteen volumes in the chronological order of their publication are as follow:

(i) 1846. রোম রাজ্যের পুরাবৃত্ত/. ১ খণ্ড/. রোম নগরের নির্ম্মাণাবধি গ্রাকসদ্বয়ের মৃত্যু পর্য্যন্ত/. ইউত্রোপিয়াস্ লাটিন গ্রন্থকারকের/. ব্যাখ্যা।/. কলিকাতা লালদীঘির নিকট রোজারিও সাহেবের/. যন্ত্রালয়ে মুদ্রাঙ্কিত

1 The Council of Education approved of his project, and Government directed purchase of 500 copies of each volume for distribution to the Bengali schools.

হইল।/, ইং ১৮৪৬ শক ১৭৬৭/. The History of Rome, Part I. Freely translated from [John Clarke's version of] Entropius, and interspersed with additional matter from various sources. pp. 140. In the মঙ্গলাচরণ the date given is Calcutta 26th January 1846, ১৪ই মাঘ শক ১৭৬৭.

(ii) 1846. ক্ষেত্রতত্ত্ব ১ম খণ্ড: Elements of Geometry, Part I.

(iii) 1846. বিবিধ বিষয়ক পাঠ/ ১ম খণ্ড।/ কলিকাতা লালদীঘির নিকট etc., as above. ইং ১৮৪৬, শক ১৭৬৮. Miscellaneous Readings/or,/Detached Pieces on Various Subjects,/adapted to the/comprehension of the Natives of Bengal,/Part I./Calcutta Ostell and Lepage, and P. S. D'Rozario and Co./1846.—The first chapter gives a description of the Earth ; the second chapter, narrative and historical, contains selections from Greek historians Herodotus, Plutarch etc., Gāndhārī's Lament from the Mahābhārata, story of Rāma and Bharata from the Rāmāyaṇa, and a legend about Kālīdāsa.

(iv) 1846. রোম রাজ্যের পুরাবৃত্ত ২য় খণ্ড।/ ১৮৪৬।

(v) 1847. জীবনবৃত্তান্ত/ ১ খণ্ড।/ যুধিষ্ঠির, কংফুছে, প্লেতো, বিক্রমাদিত্য,/ আলফ্রেড এবং সুলতান/ মামুদের চরিত্র।/ কলিকাতা সমাচার চন্দ্রিকা যন্ত্রে শ্রীযুত এ. লরেন্স/ সাহেব কর্ত্তৃক মুদ্রিত হইল।/ ইং ১৮৪৭ শক ১৭৬৮/Biography, Part I. containing the lives of Yudhisthira [original contribution], Confucius [from Du Halde's description of the empire of China], Plato [from Stanley's History of Philosophy], Vicramaditya [original contribution], Alfred [from Turner's History of the Anglo-Saxons]. Sultan Mahmud [from Elphinstone's History of India]. Calcutta: Ostell and Lepage and P. S. D'Rozario Co. 1847. pp. 168.

(vi) 1847. ইজিপ্ত দেশের পুরাবৃত্ত/ রলিন্স এন্সেণ্ট হিস্টরি এবং এন্সাইক্লোপিডিয়া/ ব্রিটানিকা হইতে অনুবাদিত।/ কলিকাতা সমাচার চন্দ্রিকা যন্ত্রে শ্রীযুত এ লরেন্স/ সাহেব কর্ত্তৃক মুদ্রিত হইল।/ ইং ১৮৪৭ শক ১৭৬৮।/. The/History/of Ancient Egypt./ From Rollin and the Encyclopaedia Brittanica./ Calcutta:/Ostell and

Lepage, and D'Rozario and Co./1847. pp. 169. The work is divided into three parts: (a) Description of Egypt ইজিপ্ত দেশের বর্ণন (pp. 1-34), (b) Description of the customs and manners of the Egyptians মিসর দেশীয় লোকের রীতিনীতি বর্ণন (pp. 35-79)—both these topics translated from Rollin (c) Early History of Egypt (pp. 79-169), translated from Encyl-Britt.

(vii) 1847. বিবিধ/বিষয়ক পাঠ ২য় খণ্ড। Miscellaneous Readings, Part II. (The description on the title-page same as above). সমাচার চন্দ্রিকা যন্ত্রে মুদ্রিত। ইং ১৮৪৭ শক ১৭৬৮. The work is divided into three parts: (a) Moral Tales and Legends গল্প ও নীতিকথা (include stories about Kālayavan, Sagar, Kālidāsa, fall of the Pāṇḍavas, origin of Buddhism, story of the elephant and the blind men). (b) Historical পুরাবৃত্ত বিষয়ক কথা (story of Hannibal from Arnold.) (c) Voyages and Travels ভ্রমণকারিদের বৃত্তান্ত compiled from various sources.

(viii) 1848. (a) ভূগোল বৃত্তান্ত/প্রথম ভাগ।/ কলিকাতা সমাচার চন্দ্রিকা যন্ত্রে মুদ্রিত। ইং ১৮৪৮ শক ১৭৬৯/. Geography./Part I./ Containing a description of Asia and Europe./Compiled from Murray's Encyclopaedia / of Geography, Molte Brun's/ Geography, and other works./Calcutta etc., as before. 1848.

(ix) 1848. ক্ষেত্রতত্ত্ব ২য় খণ্ড। Elements of Geometry, Part II. 1848. The two Parts of this work are based on "First to Sixth Books of Euclid by John Playfair, with additions by William Wallace,...to which is prefixed an extract from Lord Brougham's essay on the object etc., of science, and a short compendium of algebraic rules from Whewell's Mechanical Euclid, a selection from Bland's Geometrical Problems, and the Līlāvatī of Bhāskarāchārya.

(x) 1849. নীতিবোধক ইতিহাস।/ রাজদূত ও সরলতার পুরস্কার/ নামক গল্প।/ সমাচার চন্দ্রিকা যন্ত্রে মুদ্রিত হইল।/ ইং ১৮৪৯ শক ১৭৭০।/ Moral Tales,/ containing the King's Messengers/ by Rev. W. Adams M.A./ and / The Reward of Honesty/ by Maria Edgework./ Adapted for the use of Young Readers in

Bengal./ Printed by Rajkissen Banerjea at the Samachar Chandrīka Press, 10, Bechoo Chatterjee's Street, Calcutta. 1849.

(xi-xii) 1850. চিত্তোৎকর্ষবিধান/ প্রথম ও দ্বিতীয় খণ্ড।/ কলিকাতা বিদ্যাকল্পদ্রুম যন্ত্রে শ্রীযুত হরিহর সান্যাল কর্ত্তৃক/ মুদ্রিত হইল।/ ইং ১৮৫০ শক ১৭৭১।/ The / Improvement of the Mind / containing Remarks and Rules/for the/Attainment and Communication of Useful Knowledge/by Isaac Watts D. D./Adapted for the use of Young Readers in Bengal. Vols. i-ii./Calcutta: R. C. Lepage and Co. and P. S. D Rozario and Co./ 1850. Printed by Harihar Sandel, Encyclopaedia Press, No. 148, Cornwallis Street, Calcutta.

(xiii) 1851. জীবন বৃত্তান্ত।/ ২য় খণ্ড।/ লাইব্রেরি অব ইউস্‌ফুল নলেজ নামক গ্রন্থাবলী হইতে/ সংক্ষেপে সংগৃহীত।/ গ্যালিলিওর চরিত্র। কলিকাতা বিদ্যাকল্পদ্রুম যন্ত্রে শ্রীযুত মনোমোহন দাস/ কর্ত্তৃক মুদ্রিত হইল।/ ইং ১৮৫১ শক ১৭৭২।/ The/Life of Galileo/Abridged from/ The Library/of Useful Knowledge./ Encyclopaedia Press, No. 148 Cornwallis Street, Calcutta 1857.—The English life, from which the translation was made, was written by "John Drinkwater Bethune, the late President of the Council of Education" ; in its introduction there is a short sketch of Bethune's life.

Although mostly compilations these thirteen volumes on a variety of subjects indicate not only Kṛṣṇamohan's patience and industry, but also his desire to convey useful information to the educated youngmen of his day. With a similar object he published on September 7, 1850, a weekly journal, named *Saṃbad-sudhāṃśu*, in which appeared not only general news but also notices of books and literary articles. The monthly subscription was four annas only. After a circulation for about eleven months it ceased publication on August 2, 1851. After J. C. Marshman left India in 1852 Kṛṣṇamohan edited the Government Gazette for some time. He was also a

contributor to the bilingual *Bengal Spectator*[1] and to the *Calcutta Review*.[2] Probably he was connected with the *Saṃbad-prabhākara* of Īśvar Gupta who writes on Baiśākh 2, 1254: বিবিধবিদ্যাতৎপর মহানুভব বাবু কৃষ্ণমোহন বন্দ্যোপাধ্যায় মহাশয় প্রভাকরের প্রতি স্নেহবশতঃ ইহার সৌভাগ্য বর্দ্ধন বিষয়ে বিপুল চেষ্টা করিয়া থাকেন।

As a friend of Young Bengal, David Hare, who was hardly an orthodox Christian, was never liked by the English missionaries, but Kṛṣṇamohan openly declared his indebtedness to Hare. At the annual memorial meetings he not only read papers but he was also an active member of the committee instituted for the award of Hare prize fund. He was also connected with the Bethune Society which was established on December 11, 1851, to commemorate the services of John Drinkwater Bethune[3]. He became its Vice-President on November 28, 1867 and held the appointment till his death in 1885. He attended its meetings regularly and took part in its discussions. On February 13, 1868 he read an interesting paper on *The Proper Plan of Oriental Literature in Indian Collegiate Education* in one of its meetings.

In 1852 Kṛṣṇamohan retired from his appointment in the Christ Church, but the same year he became Second Professor in the Bishop's College and held the post for sixteen years till 1868. The University of Calcutta in 1858 made him a member of its Senate, then of its Syndicate and also Dean of its Faculty of Arts. In recognition of his services and his learning it conferred the honorary degree of Ll. D. in 1876, the other recipients of the same degree in the convocation having been Rājendra Lāl Mitra and Monier Williams.

1 This paper was started by Ram Gopal Ghosh in 1842, chiefly for the purpose of political agitation.

2 He is said to have contributed three articles to this journal on the *Kulin Brahmin of Bengal* (1844), *Hindu Caste* and *Sanskrit Poetry*.

3 Bethune died on August 13, 1851.

Before this, on July 4, 1864, the Royal Asiatic Society of England conferred on him (as well as on Īśvar Chandra Vidāsāgar) the distinction of honorary membership.

KṚṢṆAMOHAN'S WORKS

At the Bishop's College he devoted his leisure hours to the study of Oriental language and literature. For the student of the University he edited in 1867 and 1874 respectively the *Kumāra-saṃbhava* (i-vii) and *Bhaṭṭi-kāvya* (i-v), giving an analysis of the stanzas and English explanation.

In the Bibliotheca Indica series of the Asiatic Society of Bengal he edited *Mārkaṇḍeya-purāṇa* (1862)[1] and *Nārada-pañcarātra* (1865). He also published in 1875 two Adhyāyas of the first Aṣṭaka of the *Ṛgveda* with an introduction and explanation. He is also said to have translated[2] in 1870 the *Brahma-sūtra* with the Bhāṣya of Śaṃkara. In editing and publishing these works Kṛṣṇamohan was following the tradition of his Brāhmaṇ-Paṇḍit ancestry, although he was firm in his newly acquired faith in Christianity.

The same attitude is shown by two of his nature works, written and published in his advanced old age, in which he gives an account of Hindu philosophy and ancient Indian tradition. The first work is his *Dialogues on the Hindu Philosophy* (June 1861)[3], of which a Bengali version was published in 1862 under the title *Ṣaḍ-darśana-saṃbād*[4]. The

1 In 1851 the work was published by him in the Purāṇa-saṃgraha series in Devanāgarī characters with an English translation.

2 *A Biographical Sketch of Rev. K. M. Banerjee* by Ramchandra Ghosh, Calcutta 1893, p. 90.

3 *Dialogues on the Hindu Philosophy, comprising the Nyaya, the Sankhya, the Vedant; to which is added a discussion of the authority of the Vedas* by Rev. K. M. Banerjee, Second Professor of Bishop's College, Calcutta. William and Norgate; London 1861, pp. xix, 420.

4 ষড় দর্শন সংবাদ। সত্যমেব জয়তে। Dialogues on the Hindu Philosophy. Freely rendered into Bengali with certain modifications. Calcutta: Thacker Spink and Co., 1862 (2nd Ed. 1867). pp. 526.

work consists of ten *sambāds* or dialogues between imaginary interlocutors who argue and interpret the various philosophical systems, including Vedic, Bauddha and Bhāgavata points of view. But the interpretations cannot be regarded as objective or impartial, for our author wants to make out that Indian philosophy and the Vedas are not revealed or properly theistic and cannot, therefore, be accepted as authoritative. The final conclusion is thus stated (pp. 494f): সত্য মুদ্রা বাইবেল শাস্ত্র। উহাতে এমত নিরপেক্ষ প্রমাণ আছে যদ্দারা লেখকের ঐশ্বরিক উপদিষ্টতা উপপন্ন হয়, এবং উহার তাৎপর্য্যও এমন উৎকৃষ্ট যে তৎসহকারে বিশুদ্ধ ধর্ম্মের উন্নতি সম্ভবে। The decline of the study of the Sāstras in Bengal is thus described (p. 59): এক্ষণে আমাদের সকলেরই চমৎকার ব্যবহার হইয়াছে। ন্যায় বৈশেষিকাদি দর্শনের সূত্র প্রায় কেহই পড়ে না। ভাষাপরিচ্ছেদ ও বেদান্তসার আমাদের মূলগ্রন্থ হইয়াছে। গৌতমসূত্র কেহ কেহ পড়ে বটে, কিন্তু ব্রহ্মসূত্রপাঠক অতি বিরল। আর কনাদ কপিল পতঞ্জলি ও জৈমিনির সূত্র পাঠ করা দূরে থাকুক অনেকে তাহা কখনও চক্ষুতে দেখেও নাই। তথাপি আমরা এ সকল বিষয়ে তর্ক করিতে বিরত হই না। The modern 'knower of the Brahma' (ব্রহ্মজ্ঞানী) is thus ridiculed (p. 462): তরুণ বাবুটি রামমোহন রায়ের শিষ্য কিন্তু উহার প্রমাদ সাহস রামমোহন রায়কেও অতিক্রম করিয়াছে। Again, তদীয় আদ্যগুরু রামমোহন রায় শ্রুতি স্মৃতি সর্ব্বশাস্ত্রই প্রমাণ বলিয়া স্বীকার করিয়াছিলেন। পরে তদনুচরেরা ক্রমশঃ স্মৃতি পুরাণ ব্রহ্মশাস্ত্রাদি সমুদয় খণ্ডন করিয়া কেবল শ্রুতিকে অবলম্বন করিয়াছিলেন। এখন সেই এক অবলম্বন আবার ত্যাগ করিয়া স্ব স্ব সহজ জ্ঞানকেই কেবল শিরোধার্য্য করিলেন।

Kṛṣṇamohan's second word, called *The Arian Witness* (1875) obtained considerable reputation here and abroad. The detailed title page will give some indication of its main object. 'The Arian Witness: or Testimony of Arian Scriptures in corroboration of Biblical History and the Rudiments of Christian Doctrine, including dissertations on the Original

Home and early Adventures of Indo-Asians[1]'. Like the previous work the object of the present work is twofold: historical and theological. In the light of later advance of knowledge the historical part can no longer be accepted ; but the author's object was not historical investigation. He makes an attempt to show from ancient legend and tradition that what is explicitly revealed in the Bible is implied in works like the Vedas of the Indo-Aryans. For instance, the self-sacrifice of Jesus Christ is prognosticated by the self-sacrifice of Prajāpati. Thus, evidence of Christianity is shown to have been implied in the ancient thoughts of the Aryans. Although the proposition was supported by considerable learning and acumen, it was not accepted by independent and impartial judgment. As it was adversely criticised in the *Academy* of July 28, 1877, Kṛṣṇamohan wrote in reply *Two Essays as Supplements to the Arian Witness* (1880, pp. vii+79).

In 1867 Kṛṣṇamohan lost his wife. Next year he retired from Sibpur Bishop's College and came to live permanently in Calcutta. As he received a pension from the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel he did not have pecuniary difficulty in his old age. His field of activity widened. Besides being connected with Bethune Society, Calcutta University, and Bengal Asiatic Society, Kṛṣṇamohan became one of the Commissioners of the newly established[2] Municipality of Calcutta from 1880 to March 31, 1885. Long before this, he joined the British India Society which was founded on April 20, 1843. He was elected President of the Indian League established by Sisir Kumar Ghosh in 1875 ; and then in 1876 he became President also of the Indian Association started by Anandamohan and Surendranath. This much respected,

1 The title-page continues: "Published by Thacker Spink and Co., Calcutta and Trubner Co. 57 and 59 Ludgate Hill, London 1875.' The Preface is dated December 15, 1875.

2 In 1876.

"hoary-headed Padre"[1] believed that for all-round welfare of his country, Indians should acquire greater political power; and therefore he joined in the political agitation for appointment of Indians in the Civil Service, for removal of restriction on the Press and other important movements. Referring to this, Surendranāth Bandyopādhyāya says in his work entitled *A Nation in the Making* (p. 62): "A scholar and a man of letters it was not till late in life that he began to take an active part in politics. He was associated with the Indian League and became President of the Indian Association...... He was then past sixty; and though growing years had deprived him of the alertness of youth, yet in the keenness of his interest and in the vigour and outspokenness of his utterances, he exhibited the ardour of the youngest recruit to our ranks. Never was there a man more uncompromising in what he believed to be the truth, and hardly was such amiability combined with such strength and firmness."

In 1885 Kṛṣṇamohan received the decoration of C. I. E. But the same year on May 11, he died, full of years and honours, at his residence in 7, Chowringhee Lane, Calcutta. At his own wish he was buried by the side of his wife's grave on the grounds of the Bishop's College.

Kṛṣṇamohan was not only a powerful writer in English but also for many years he studied Sanskrit and Bengali. On his Bengali composition, however, there is no stamp or influence of English; on the contrary it leaned more towards Sanskrit. The age of 'Missionary' Bengali was now over.

1 This is the epithet given to him by Kṛṣṇadās Pāl. Hemchandra Bandyopādhyāy his হুতোম প্যাঁচার গান describes Kṛṣṇamohan as a "মানোয়ারী জাহাজ" and describes his personal appearance thus: শুভ্র ভুরু, শুভ্র কেশ, শুভ্র দাড়ি চেরা। গিরীক্-ল্যাটিন্-হিব্রু-ইংরাজি ফোয়ারা। মাকাল বনের মাঝে পাক আম্র ফল, স্বধর্ম্মত্যাগী তবু স্বজাতির দল।......খাপুরে ভূশুণ্ডী বুড়ো সবেতে মহৎ; বাঙ্গালীর মাঝে যেন ধবলা পর্ব্বত! Dīnabandhu Mitra in his সুরধুনী কাব্য says: খৃষ্টধর্ম্মে মতি কৃষ্ণমোহন পবিত্র/, বিদ্যাবিশারদ অতি বিশুদ্ধ চরিত্র ॥

Kṛṣṇamohan's Bengali style was comparatively simple, free from affectation and yet elevated. But since his subject-matter was of a serious kind and consisted mostly of religious controversy or conveying knowledge of various arts and sciences, his diction seldom attained the ease and grace of a literary style. It is also devoid of distinctive characteristics. Leaving aside his *Bidyā-kalpadrum* written and published before 1851, his *Ṣaḍdarśana-saṃbād* was written in 1867, at a time when most of the works of Īśvar Chandra Bidyāsāgar, Akṣaya Kumār Datta, Peary Chand Mittra and Dīnabandhu Mitra, as well as Baṅkimchandra's *Durgeśnandinī* (1865) and *Kapālakuṇḍalā* (1866) had brought before the Bengali readers style of writing with which Kṛṣṇamohan's does not compare favourably. His Christian attitude was also a hindrance to its general acceptance.

In the history of Bengali culture of the first half of the 19th century, however, we remember Kṛṣṇamohan not as a Christian Missionary but as one of the leaders of his generation. Although converted to an alien religion, his mind was the mind of a Bengali ; and the hidden springs of his inspiration were love of his country and desire for the welfare of his countrymen.

2. DEBENDRA NĀTH ṬHĀKUR
(1817-1905)

After Rāmmohan left India, the Brahma-sabhā[1] was kept alive as we have seen, by Rām Chandra Bidyāvāgīśa who was its first Āchārya. Of him Debendranāth says[2]: বিদ্যাবাগীশ যথার্থ ধর্ম্মভাবে ব্রাহ্মসমাজে আসিতেন। তাঁর কথায়, তাঁর ব্যাখানে

1 Debendranāth employs the term Brāhma Samāj. Exactly when the Brahma-Sabhā, which was formed by Rāmmohan on Aug. 20, 1828, came to be called Brāhma Samāj is not known.

2 This is a quotation from Debendranāth's lecture, ব্রাহ্ম সমাজের পঞ্চবিংশতি বৎসরের পরীক্ষিত বৃত্তান্ত, ২৬শে বৈশাখ ১৭৮৬ শকে প্রদত্ত, পৃঃ ১৯-২০।

আমাদের মত আকৃষ্ট হইত; আর সমাজের প্রতি তাহার যে যথার্থ শ্রদ্ধা ছিল, তাহার প্রমাণ এই যে তিনি দরিদ্র ব্রাহ্মণ হইয়াও মৃত্যু সময়ে ৫০০ টাকা সমাজকে দান করিয়া গিয়াছেন। তিনি রামমোহন রায়ের পরে দ্বাদশ বৎসর পর্য্যন্ত কেবল একমাত্র স্বকীয় যত্নে সমাজকে রক্ষা করিয়াছিলেন।

Debendranāth, eldest son of Dwarkā Nāth Ṭhākur (d. Aug. 1, 1846), was born on May 15, 1817. He was admitted into Rāmmohan's Anglo-Hindu School, situated at the corner of Cornwallis Square, at the age of 7 or 8. Here he struck up friendship with his fellow-student Ramāprasād Rāy, Rāmmohan's son, and used to visit Rāmmohan at his home: আমি প্রায় প্রতি শনিবার ছুটির সময় ছুটি হইলে রমাপ্রসাদ রায়ের সহিত রামমোহনের মাণিকতলা বাগানে যাইতাম। অন্য দিনও দেখা করিয়া আসিতাম।[1] In 1832 (১৭ই পৌষ ১৭৫৪ শক) the students of the Anglo-Hindu School started a সর্ব্বতত্ত্বদীপিকা সভা for 'গৌড়ীয় ভাষার উত্তমরূপে অর্চ্চনার্থ' with Ramāprasād as President and Debendranāth as Secretary. At first religious questions were not discussed, but later on they were admitted. Debendranāth left the school in 1830 and joined the Hindu College next year after Derozio had left.[2] He studied there probably for two or three years, after which he joined the Carr Tagore and Company in 1834; but the Company went bankrupt in 1848. With great uprightness he took upon himself the entire burden of debt, although Prasanna Kumār Ṭhākur had prudently advised to convert his estate into *benāmī*.

Debendranāth was a member of the Sādhāraṇ Jñānopārjikā Sabhā or the Society for the Acquisition of General Knowledge ever since it was established on May 16, 1838. The

1 প্রিয়নাথ শাস্ত্রী (সম্পাদিত): পূজ্যপাদ শ্রীমন্মহর্ষি দেবেন্দ্রনাথ ঠাকুরের স্বরচিত জীবনচরিত, Calcutta 1898, p. 16.

2 Derozio left Hindu College on April 25, 1831.

object of the society was to discuss, both in English and in Bengali, various measures for the welfare of the country. The management of the society was vested in a committee of which Kṛṣṇamohan Bandyopādhyāy was a member. The president was Tārāchāṁd Chakravartī, who was the first secretary of the Brahma-sabhā (afterwards Brāhma Samāj), and among the members were Ramgopal Ghosh, Ramtanu Lahiri and Peary Chand Mittra, all of whom were distinguished men of the time. In 1843 they started the British India Society which was meant for political discussion.

We have already noted[1] that Debendranāth was associated with the Hindu Hitārthī Bidyālay, of which Rādhākānta Deb was president. This Hindu Charitable Institution was not only a school but it was also a symbol of self-protection against aggressive proselytising zeal of Christian Missionaries who had established free schools with the objective of education as a means of evangelisation. It was opened in the house of Rādhākṛṣṇa Basāk on March 1846, with Bhūdeb Mukhopādhyāy as Head Master. In the words of Debendranāth himself: সেই অবধি খ্রীষ্টান হইবার স্রোত মন্দীভূত হইল। একেবারে মিশনারীদের মস্তকে কুঠারাঘাত পড়িল।

THE TATTVABODHINĪ SABHĀ

On October 6, 1839 (Āśvin 21, 1761 Śaka)[2] the Tattvarañjanī Sabhā was established at Joḍāsaṁko house of Dvarkānāth. The name was changed into Tattvabodhinī Sabhā at its second sitting on the advice of Rāmchandra Bidyābāgīśa. Debendranāth thus states its object in his autobiography (p. 65): ইহার উদ্দেশ্য আমাদিগের সমুদয় শাস্ত্রের নিগূঢ় তত্ত্ব ও বেদান্ত প্রতিপাদ্য ব্রহ্মবিদ্যার প্রচার. In Śaka 1764 (=1842 A. D.) Debendranāth, who was one of the trustees of Rāmmohan's Brahma-sabhā, organised it on somewhat different lines into

1 See above under Rādhākānta Deb.

2 স্বরচিত জীবনচরিত পৃঃ ২১।

the Brāhma Samāj ;[1] it was at his suggestion the Tattvabodhinī Sabhā undertook from next year the management of the Samāj, into which the Sabhā was finally merged in May, 1859.

In order to give effect to the object of the Tattvabodhinī Sabhā three different means were adopted viz. (i) Tattvabodhinī Paṭhśālā (ii) Tattvabodhinī Patrikā (iii) Compilation and Circulation of Śāstra-works.

TATTVABODHINĪ PĀṬHŚĀLĀ

We have seen that as a result of Bentinck's Resolution of 1855 English became the medium of instruction in Government schools ; and English began to be studied more assiduously. Bengali education and Bengali Pāṭhśālas consequently declined. In order to obviate this unfortunate result the authorities of the Hindu College, at the instance of Prasanna Kumār Ṭhākur, opened a model Bengali Paṭhśālā on January 18, 1840, the primary object of which was to teach through the medium of Bengali. Debendranāth's Tattvabodhinī Pāṭhśālā was opened on the same lines on June 13, 1840, but with religious instruction as an added feature of its teaching.[2] The Paṭhśālā had also a wider object. The Christian missionaries in the meantime had established free English schools with the object of education as a means of evangelisation. The Pāṭhśālā, with its provision of religious instruction, was meant to stem the tide of their efforts.[3]

1 The Brāhma Samāj appears to have been actually established in August 1828 at a rented house of Kamal Basu at Joḍāsaṃko (জোড়াসাঁকো).

2 "এই পাঠশালায় সাধারণ শিক্ষার সঙ্গে ছাত্রদের ধর্মশিক্ষারও ব্যবস্থা হইল।" (তত্ত্ববোধিনী পত্রিকা, Bhādra Śaka 1766, p. 104).

3 Akṣay Kumār Datta was appointed a teacher of this school from its inception on June 13, 1840. His বর্ণমালা, ভূগোল and পদার্থবিদ্যা were written for this school. When the school was transferred to Bansbedia he declined to go there as its Head Master.

The Pāṭhśālā, as well as the Sabhā, was for nearly three years (June 1840-April 1843) accommodated in a house rented from Dakṣiṇārañjan Mukhopādhyāy at the Simla locality of Calcutta.[1] As the expenses were heavy, the Pāṭhśālā was transferred to the village of Baṃśabāṭi (Bansbedia) in the Hooghly district on April 30, 1843. It was ultimately abolished, along with the Sabhā which was amalgamated with the Brāhma Samāj, by Debendranāth himself on May 1859.

TATTVABODHINĪ PATRIKĀ

The Tattvabodhinī Patrikā, with Akṣay Kumār Datta as its first editor, was published on August 16, 1843 (Bhadra 1, Śaka 1765). With regard to the object of this publication, Debendranāth himself informs us: বেদ, বেদান্ত ও পরব্রহ্ম উপাসনা প্রচার করা আমার যে মুখ্য সংকল্প ছিল, তাহা এই পত্রিকা হওয়াতে সুসিদ্ধ হইল।[2] Although religious propaganda was its chief object, the Patrikā published in its long career of usefulness articles on literature, philosophy, antiquity, social and sometimes political reform. There was a committee for selection of articles and works, of which Debendranāth was chairman and Akṣay Kumār secretary ; but among members it counted some of the eminent men of the time, such as Īśvar Chandra Bidyāsāgar, Rājendralāl Mitra and Rājnārāyaṇ Basu. Debendranāth, however, does not appear satisfied with the positivist views of Akṣay Kumār, and tried to bring him round to his own theistic ideas. In his autobiography (p. 76) he says: আমার মতে তাঁহাকে আনিবার চেষ্টা করিতাম ; কিন্তু তাহা আমার পক্ষে সহজ ব্যাপার ছিল না। আমি কোথায়, আর তিনি কোথায় ! আমি খুঁজিতেছি ঈশ্বরের সহিত আমার কি সম্বন্ধ ; আর তিনি খুঁজিতেছেন, বাহ্যবস্তুর সহিত মানবপ্রকৃতির কি সম্বন্ধ ; আকাশ পাতাল প্রভেদ !

1 Two other schools were opened, viz. Barrackpore Pāṭhśāla and Sukhasāgar school, before 1846 and 1869 respectively.

2 স্বরচিত জীবনচরিত, পৃঃ ২৯-৩০।

INTEREST IN VEDIC STUDIES

Debendranāth observed that there was a decline of Vedic studies in Bengal. As he proposed to have derived the principles of his Brāhma religion from the Vedas (বেদরূপ কল্পতরুর অগ্রশাখার ফল হইল এই ব্রাহ্মধর্ম্ম), he became alive to the importance of Vedic studies. Accordingly he selected and sent four Brahmans to study the Vedas (along with their ancilliary Upaniṣads) at Benares. They were: Ānanda Chandra Bhaṭṭāchārya (Atharva-veda), Tārānāth Bhaṭṭāchārya (Sāma-veda), Bāṇeśvar Bhāṭṭāchārya (Yajur-veda) and Ramānāth Bhaṭṭāchārya (Ṛg-veda). Debendranāth himself went to Benares in 1847 to see for himself the state of Vedic studies there. But on account of the failure of Carr Tagore and Company in 1848 he had to bring them back to Calcutta. Although not fully realised, the revival of Vedic studies was thus a notable achievement of Debendranāth.

We find Debendranāth connected with most leading educational and cultural institutions of his time, such as Hare Memorial Committee, Hare Prize Fund and Bethune Society. He became president of the Samājonnati-vidhāyinī Suhṛd-Samiti (সমাজোন্নতিবিধায়িনী সুহৃদ্-সমিতি), which was started on December 15, 1854 by Kissory Chand Mitra in his garden-house at Cossipore, Calcutta, with most of the leading men of the time as members. One of its important resolutions urged widow-remarriage and opening of girls' schools at important centres in Calcutta. He was also secretary of the British India Association for more than two years. In 1859 Keśab Chandra Sen joined Debendranāth in the work of the Brāhma Samāj, and for five years they worked together and delivered weekly lecture on Brāhma Dharma. For appealing to a wider public a fortnightly paper called the *Indian Mirror* was published on August 1, 1861, Debendranāth himself bearing all its expenses. On April 12, 1862, he made Keśab Chandra Āchārya of the Samāj, while he himself became the Chief Āchārya. Keśab Chandra honoured him with the title of Maharṣi (মহর্ষি), while he conferred the title of Brahmā-

nanda (ব্রহ্মানন্দ) on Keśab Chandra. But a difference arose on the question of wearing distinctive marks of caste or sect (e.g. wearing of the sacred thread) by the Āchārya or men of his position. Debendranāth could not agree to discarding them. The agitators, headed by Keśab Chandra Sen and Pratāp Chandra Majumdār, seceded and established on November 11, 1866, the Bhāratvarṣīya Brāhma Samāj, in contradistinction to which Debendranāth's Samāj came to be called the Ādi Brāhma Samāj[1].

In 1863 Debendranāth purchased land at Santiniketan for the purpose of solitary meditation, and executed a Trust-deed twenty-five years later (March 8, 1886) for the purpose of creating an Āśrama there. It became the centre of the literary activity of his youngest son, Rabīndranāth.

Debendranāth died at the age of eighty-eight on January 9, 1905.

DEBENDRANĀTH'S WORKS

It is not necessary for our purpose to mention and give details of Debendranāth's works[2], which consist generally of discourses or lectures on Brāhma religion and its propagation. Of these his *Brāhma-dharma Grantha* (ব্রাহ্মধর্ম্ম গ্রন্থ) in two parts (1850, 1851-52) and *Brāhma-dharmer Vyākhyān* also in two parts (Śaka 1783 and 1788=A.D. 1861 and 1866), with

1 The *Sambād-prabhākar* of Iśvar Gupta (Srāban 8, 1272 B.S= August 7, 1865) refers to this schism: কলিকাতা ব্রাহ্মসমাজে নূতন বিপ্লব উপস্থিত হইয়াছে। বাবু কেশবচন্দ্র সেন ও প্রতাপচন্দ্র মজুমদার প্রভৃতি কয়েকজন ব্রাহ্ম তাহাদিগের মতানুযায়ী নিয়ম প্রবর্ত্তনার্থ প্রধান আচার্য্য শ্রীযুক্ত বাবু দেবেন্দ্রনাথ ঠাকুরকে যে পত্র লিখিয়াছেন, বাবু দেবেন্দ্রনাথ ঠাকুর তাহাতে সম্মত হন নাই। বাবু কেশবচন্দ্র সেন তদন্যথায় তাহাদিগের স্ব স্ব উপাসনার নিমিত্ত যে নূতন সমাজ প্রতিষ্ঠার উপদেশ চাহেন, প্রধান আচার্য্য তাহাতে সন্তুষ্ট হইয়া লিখিয়াছেন, দেশের মধ্যে যত অধিক পরিমাণে ব্রাহ্মসমাজ সংস্থাপিত হয় ততই মঙ্গল।

2 A good list (with specimens quoted) will be found in Jogesh Chandra Bagal's work on Debendranāth in the *Sāhitya-sādhak-caritamālā* no. 45, pp. 85-107.

its supplement (*Vyākhyāner Pariśiṣṭa*, Śaka 1807=A.D. 1885) are most noteworthy. Debendranāth believed in the revealed character of the Veda, but he wanted the texts to be tested by what he calls Ātma-pratyaya or inner self-conviction. The principles of Brāhma religion, in his opinion, are to be classified in selected texts according as such texts constitute Upaniṣad (knowledge) and Anuśāsana (injunction). Accordingly in the first and second part of *Brāhma-dharma Grantha* the texts which constitute Upaniṣad and Anuśāsana respectively are selected. The two parts of *Brāhma-dharmer Vyākhyān* contain respectively 26 and 21 discourses. Leaving aside his other lectures and tracts, we have already mentioned his autobiography published after his death in 1898 and entitled পূজ্যপাদ শ্রীমন্মহর্ষি দেবেন্দ্রনাথ ঠাকুরের স্বরচিত জীবনবৃত্তান্ত[1]। It contains the story of his life from the age of 18 to 41 in thirty-nine chapters. His injunction to his nominated publisher was: ইহাতে কোন নূতন শব্দ যোগ করিবে না, ইহার বিন্দুবিসর্গও পরিত্যাগ করিবে না। আমি এই পৃথিবীতে জীবিত থাকিতে ইহা মুদ্রিত করিয়া প্রকাশ করিবে না। The simple, straight forward style of this work has an undoubted literary flavour, and it is easily one of the best specimens of prose writing of the period.

HIS ATTITUDE TOWARDS HINDU RELIGION AND SOCIETY

It does not appear to have been Debendranāth's object to secede entirely from the established Hindu religion and society. He declares accordingly: হিন্দুধর্ম্ম অতি প্রশস্ত ও উদার ধর্ম্ম......অতএব হিন্দুদিগের হইতে বিচ্ছিন্ন না হইয়া তাহাদের মধ্যে থাকিয়াই ব্রাহ্মধর্ম্ম প্রচার করিতে হইবে[2]। Except what is called idolatory[3] he accepted practically all the main tenets of Hindu

1 It was published by Priyanath Sastri, pp. 202+75

2 ব্রাহ্মসমাজের পঞ্চবিংশতি বৎসরের পরীক্ষিত বৃত্তান্ত, পৃঃ ৪২-৪৩।

3 "একমাত্র পৌত্তলিকতা পরিহারের জন্যই এ দেশে ব্রাহ্মধর্ম্মের উদ্ভব" —পত্রাবলী পৃঃ ২১৪।

religion and worship. Following the indication of Rāmmohan Rāy he accepted the Gāyatrī-Mantra and the Upanayana ceremony (in 1873), in which the sacred thread was worn. He dispensed with the use of Śālagrām Śilā in marriage and other ceremonies, but on the occasion of the Śrāddha of his father he burnt the Kuśa-puttalikā! The views of the Vedāntists who declared identity of the worshipper and the worshipped were unacceptable to him.[1] He did not think it wise to dispense with the restrictions of caste,[2] and in this view Akṣay Kumār Dutta agreed with him.[3]

HIS GENERAL CONTRIBUTION TO THE BRĀHMA MOVEMENT

Debendranāth's general contribution to the Brahma movement may be summarised thus: (1) creation of a group or sect of Brahma-worshippers, with a creed set forth in the প্রতিজ্ঞাপত্র (pratijñā-patra), and settle their mode of worship. This Rāmmohan never did. (2) making Ātma-pratyay the ultimate test. He was not catholic enough, like Rāmmohan to be friendly to Christianity and Muhammedanism; but like Rāmmohan again, he was auxions to keep Brahmaism within the fold of Hinduism (with the exception of what is called idolatory about which, however, their ideas and practices were indefinite). He laid stress not only on the grace of God but also on human endeavour. He retained some of the Hindu ritual and ceremony; but on this score he was thus ridiculed by a contemporary lampooner: যখন ব্রাহ্মশ্রাদ্ধ.

1 "পৌত্তলিকেরা যেমন ব্রহ্মেতে মনুষ্যত্ব আরোপ করে, বৈদান্তিকেরা তেমনি ঈশ্বরকে শূন্য করিয়া ফেলে।" স্বরচিত জীবনচরিত, পরিশিষ্ট পৃঃ ১৭-১৮।

2 Although he declares: ব্রাহ্মদের মধ্যে জাতিভেদ নাই; ব্রাহ্মণ শূদ্রের মধ্যে পরস্পরের আদান প্রদান হইতে পারে।'—পত্রাবলী পৃঃ ৩৮; ১৩ মাঘ ১৭৮৪ শকে রাজনারায়ণ বসুকে লিখিত।

3 'জাতিভেদ ভঙ্গ করিবার সময় এখনও উপস্থিত হয় নাই। শ্রীযুক্ত অক্ষয় বাবুরও এই মত।'—পত্রাবলী পৃঃ ৫০।

ব্রাহ্ম অন্নপ্রাশন, ব্রাহ্ম জাতকর্ম্ম, ব্রাহ্ম সূতিকাপূজো ও ব্রাহ্ম উপনয়ন প্রভৃতি চল্‌বে, তখন ব্রাহ্মমতে সরস্বতী পূজো ও দুর্গোৎসব না হতে পারে কেন?[1]

We have noted that Rāmmohan preached monotheism, but he was no religious teacher, nor did he establish any new sect. He was a rationalist[1] who did not believe in idolatory, but he had faith in one God, and ostensibly based his faith on the Vedānta which, however, he modified in his own way. His main position was monotheism, belief in oneness with a formless, all-pervading power, and in the illusory nature of world and life. It was a kind of Semetic monotheism reinformed by Vedāntic monism. Though a disciple of Rāmmohan, Debendranāth had a different temperament and somewhat different ideas. He was not a rationalist but believed in human emotion. He was not free from the spiritual tradition of what is called Indian Sādhanā, on which he primarily based his individual realisation. He did not have the bigotry of a self-constituted reforme:, but he believed that his personal realisation of spiritual truth would be conducive to social welfare. He did not take Vedānta as his ultimate spiritual authority, but he based Brahmaism, probably through the influence of Akṣay Datta, on the more liberal and universal basis of a natural religion. He could not accept absolute non-dualism; for it would obliterate the distinction between the deity and the devotee, and therefore would not permit the individual soul's longing for a personal God.

3. MADAN MOHAN TARKĀLAMKĀR (1815-1858)

We have already mentioned[2] Madan Mohan and his *Bāsabadattā* in connexion with our treatment of the School of Bhāratchandra; but since he was a popular writer of his time we will add a few words here. He was born at Bilvagrām in the district of Nadiya in 1815 (Śaka 1737). His father

1 কলিকাতার হাটহদ্দ, পৃঃ ৩১ (attributed to হুতোম প্যাঁচা or Kālīprasanna Siṃha).

2 See above vol. i, p. 393-94.

Rāmdhan Chaṭṭopādhyāy, was a copyist at Calcutta Sanskrit College. His brother Ramratna, who had succeeded his father in the post, brought Madan Mohan to Calcutta and got him admitted into the college, but he had to leave after some time on account of illness. He came back to the college in 1842 (Śaka 1764), studied various branches of Sanskrit literature for some years, and acquired some knowledge of English. It was at this college that he became a close friend of Iśvar Chandra Bidyāsāgar. After working in several colleges, including Krishnagar College and Calcutta Fort William College, he was promoted in 1847 to the post of Professor of Sanskrit and stayed for about three years in Sanskrit College, Calcutta. The Sarva-śubhakarī Patrikā[1] was published as a monthly in August 1850 through the joint efforts of Madan Mohan and Īśvar Chandra. It was about this time in 1850 he left Calcutta for Berhampore (Murshidabad) as a "judge-paṇḍit", and after six years he became Deputy Magistrate. He died of Cholera at Kāndi (in the same district) in 1858.

Of his works little need be said. His *Rasa-taraṅgiṇī* is a translation in diverse metres of erotic verses from the Sanskrit original of the same name. His *Bāsabadattā* (1836) is not exactly a translation but really an adaptation in diverse metres of Subandhu's *Vāsavadattā*.[2] The influence of Bhāratchandra is quite patent in language, versification and arrangement of topics. Madan Mohan's *Śiśu-śikṣā* (1864-65) in three parts was written at the instance of J. D. Bethune for use in girls' school. It was at one time a justly popular text-book.

4. PEARY CHAND MITTRA (1814-1883)

Although the works of Peary Chand Mittra were published after 1858, he belongs by taste and inclination to the period

1 On this monthly see Brajendra Nath Banerji, বাংলা সাময়িক পত্র, pp. 177-81.

2 Madan Mohan also edited the Sanskrit text of *Kādambarī*, Calcutta Samvat 1906.

under consideration as one of the most important writers of the Pre-Baṅkim age. It would be convenient to give here a short sketch of his life and works.

Peary Chand Mittra[1] was born in his ancestral house at Nimtolla Ghat Street, Calcutta, on July 22, 1814 (৮ই শ্রাবণ ১২২১). His grand-father Gaṅgādhar came from village Pāniseola (পানিসেওলা) in Haripāl, District Hooghly, settled in Calcutta and built a house at Nimtola Ghat Street in 1794. Gaṅgādhar's eldest son, Rāmnārāyaṇ, acquired much wealth at the Stock Exchange. Of Rāmnārāyaṇ's five sons, Peary Chand and Kissory Chand became two of the leading men of their time.

Peary Chand entered the Hindu College in July 7, 1827, but it is not known how long he studied there. Derozio had left Hindu College in 1826 ; but like Kṛṣṇamohan Bandyopādhyāy, he must have come in contact with and felt the influence of Derozio. He was appointed "Sub-librarian" at the newly opened[2] Calcutta Public Library (situated on the Esplanade Road)[3] on March 8, 1836. On the retirement of the librarian, Peary Chand was promoted in 1848 to the post of librarian and secretary, which he occupied till 1866. He became a member of its newly constituted[4] Council in 1874 and continued till his death. In 1839 he started business of export and import with Kalachand Set and Tarachand Chakravarti. Tarachand retired in 1844 and Kalachand died in 1849. In 1855 Peary Chand formed, with his two sons, a company called Peary Chand Mittra and Sons and continued the business. He became a director in many other companies.

There was hardly any important literary organisation in Calcutta of which Peary Chand was not a member. He was one of the secretaries[5] of the Sādhāraṇ Jñānopārjikā Sabhā

1 This is how he spelt his name (প্যারীচাঁদ মিত্র).

2 The Library was opened on March 21, 1835.

3 Transferred in 1844 to the first floor of the Metcalfe Hall.

4 It was constituted in 1873.

5 Ramtanu Lahiri was the other secretary.

or Society for the Acquisition of General Knowledge, which was started in 1838; a member of the committee of the British Indian Associates[1] from February 2, 1852 ; honorary secretary of the Bethune Society[2] ; a member and later on Honorary Secretary of the executive committee of the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals[3] ; and one of the honorary secretaries[4] (the other secretary having been H. Beverley) of the Bengal Social Science Association. He was also a member (from July 1847) of the Agricultural and Horticultural Society which was founded by William Carey in 1820. Peary Chand's deep interest in Agriculture is shown by his two works *Kṛṣi-pāṭh* in Bengali (1861) and *Agriculture in Bengal* in English (1881). On the death of his wife in 1860 Peary Chand became interested in spiritualism and theosophy, and some of his later Bengali works (যৎকিঞ্চিৎ 1865, অভেদী 1871 and আধ্যাত্মিকা 1880) give evidence of his interest.

MĀSIK PATRIKĀ

Jointly with his friend Rādhānāth Sikdār Peary Chand published on August 16, 1854 (=Bhādra 1, 1261 B.S.) a monthly Bengali journal simply called *Māsik Patrikā*, each number of which bore the superscription: এই পত্রিকা সাধারণের বিশেষতঃ স্ত্রীলোকের জন্যে ছাপা হইতেছে, যে ভাষায় আমাদিগের সচরাচর কথাবার্ত্তা হয়, তাহাতেই প্রস্তাব সকল রচনা হইবেক। বিজ্ঞ পণ্ডিতেরা পড়িতে চান, পড়িবেন, কিন্তু তাহাদিগের নিমিত্তে এই পত্রিকা লিখিত হয় নাই। Each number contained twelve pages. The *Māsik Patrikā* lasted for about four years.

Before this, the main organs of the students of the Hindu College were the *Jñānānveṣaṇ* (জ্ঞানান্বেষণ) and the *Bengal Spectator*,[5] to both of which Peary Chand contributed. The

1 Established in October 1851.
2 Started on December 11, 1852.
3 Founded in October 1861.
4 From 1867 to 1873.
5 See Brajendranath Banerji, 'বাংলা সাময়িক পত্র, pp. 56-61, 132-36.

first-named periodical was in existence from June 18, 1831 to November 1840. The *Bengal Spectator* was a bilingual published in April 1842 as a monthly, but from 1842 it had become a fortnightly and from March next year a weekly; but the publication stopped after a few months in November. To both these periodicals Peary Chand contributed.

Honours came unsolicited to him, and he was justly recognised as a distinguished and enthusiastic writer. Peary Chand died of dropsy in November 23, 1883.

HIS BENGALI WORKS

His Bengali works in their chronological order are:

(1) আলালের ঘরের দুলাল।[1] 1858, pp. 40+180. It sketches a Rake's Progress by means of the story of a rich man's spoilt son named Matilāl and his ultimate reform. This is Peary Chand's most important work and constitutes a landmark in the history of a Bengali prose. It was at first published serially in and from the seventh number of the *Māsik Patrikā*. The story is slight, but in the course of the narrative is given an amusing picture of the society of contemporary Calcutta, with a running description of its bazar, police, magistrate's court, a marriage ceremony and its preliminary noisy discussions, practical joke played upon the bride-groom's party, an elaborate Śrāddha ceremony performed with great éclat and similar entertaining incidents. Although Baradā Prasād, Beṇī Bābu and Bechārām and Rāmlāl are, more or less, characters of the conventional type, the wicked Ṭhakchāchā and the sanctimonious Bāñchārām are vivid creations.

As a humourist Peary Chand bases his story on the actual life of the people. He does not go to the Epic or

for a detailed account and reproduction of a page of the *Bengal Spectator*.

1 The title page: আলালের ঘরের দুলাল। শ্রীযুত টেকচাঁদ ঠাকুর কর্ত্তৃক বিরচিত। কলিকাতা। রোজারিও কোম্পানির যন্ত্রালয়ে মুদ্রিত। সন ১২৬৪। Calcutta: Printed by D'Rozario and Co. 8, Tank-Square.

Purāṇas for his plot but invents it to suit his purpose. But the work, in spite of its underlying vein of moral earnestness never, never loses its lightness of touch.

The most important feature of the work, however, is its language and diction. As a reaction against the Sanskritic and Persinised manner and mode of expression of the Paṇḍits and Munsis of the Fort William College, Peary Chand deliberately adopted verbatim the colloquial language of the people as his norm, and sedulously excluded every word and phrase that had a learned appearance. As Baṅkim puts it: যে ভাষা সকল বাঙ্গালীর বোধগম্য এবং সকল বাঙ্গালী কর্ত্তৃক ব্যবহৃত, প্রথম তিনিই তাহা গ্রন্থপ্রণয়নে ব্যবহার করিলেন। But in his zeal Peary Chand forgot that there was a distinction between literary language and the language actually spoken, and sometimes sacrificed the dignity of the one for the looseness of the other.[1] The Ālālī style, however, by its extreme colloquialism, brought to a head the movement antithetical to the Sanskrit College style of the fifties with its heavy Sanskritisation, and definitely posed the opposition between the plain and the ornate style in the history of Bengali prose, until the genius of Baṅkimchandra found a proper synthesis.[2]

(2) মদ খাওয়া বড় দায় জাত থাকার কি উপায়। 1859 (1266 B.S.), pp. 62. কলিকাতা। রোজারিও কোম্পানির যন্ত্রালয়ে মুদ্রিত। Calcutta. Printed by D'Rozario and Co. It illustrates the evils of drinking by means of some amusing but instructive stories.

(3) রামারঞ্জিকা। 1860, pp. 94. It consists of instruction to women in the form of a dialogue between a man and his wife. It contains twenty papers on women's education, efficacy of maternal instruction, notices of mothers of distinguished men, examples of woman's fortitude, spiritual culture, efficacy of

1 The work is so well known and so often reprinted that it is not necessary to quote specimens here.

2 See above p. 263.

prayer, duties of a faithful wife with short sketches of such distinguished wives, duties of the husband, education of women in Japan, paths of virtue and vice, and a tale of a holy woman.

(4) গীতাঙ্কুর। 1861, pp. 16. It is a collection of 35 religious songs, including some songs on Brahma.

(5) যৎকিঞ্চিৎ। 1865, pp. 126. It is a work on the existence and attributies of God, immortality of the soul, the next world, mode of worship and other relevant topics, with an illustrative story.

(6) অভেদী। 1871, pp. 80. It is an allegorical novel of the spiritual quest of Anveşan-chandra and his wife and their ultimate attainment through pain and suffering.

(7) ডেভিড হেয়ারের জীবন চরিত। 1878, pp. 26. It is a Bengali version of the author's Biographical Sketch of David Hare (1877).

(8) এতদ্দেশীয় স্ত্রীলোকদিগের পূর্ব্বাবস্থা। 1878, pp. 48. It describes the condition of women in ancient times, with "biographical sketches of exemplary Hindu females and how they attained a holy and pure life."

(9) আধ্যাত্মিকা। 1880, pp. 100. In the form of a novel meant expressly for women it describes the career of an imaginary Ādhyātmikā, incidentally dealing with a large variety of topics on the excellence of women's education.

(10) বামাতোষিণী। 1881, pp. 72. In the form of a moral tale the work deals with the training of girls and practical work of love and charity suitable to women.[1]

1 This is the author's own description of the work. "The plot of the tale is that an educated Hindu is blessed with an excellent wife, with whom he considered it a sacred duty to educate his daughter and son. He leaves his family and goes to England to qualify himself for the bar. From England he gives a description of English life, a brief account of remarkable places there, of the English home and its management, how female education is carried on there, and the different humane and philanthropic works in which English ladies are engaged. It is shown that while Hindu ladies are devoted to spiritualism, austerity and

In making a general estimate of Peary Chand's contribution to Bengali literature we should realise that the credit belongs to him of (1) adopting the plain spoken language as a reaction against the sesquipedalian affectation of the so-called Sādhu Bhāṣā, and (2) of deriving the plots of his stories from the actual life of the people. In both these respects he inaugurated the modern trend of Bengali literature.

5. AKṢAY KUMĀR DATTA
(1820-1886)

Although Akṣay Kumār Datta's first work was not published till 1851, he was, like Īśvar Chandra Bidyāsāgar (1820-1891), one of the pioneer authors whose works laid the foundation of modern Bengali literature in the first half of the 19th century.[1]

Akṣay Kumār was born of a respectable Kāyastha family in the Chupī (চুপী) village about four miles from Navadvīpa (near Pūrvasthalī) in the district of Burdwan on Saturday, July 15, 1820 (Śrāvaṇ 1, 1227 B.S.). His father Pītāmbar Datta was Dārogā (inspector) and Cashier of Kutaghāṭ of Tolly's Nulla at Kidderpore. At the age of ten he came and lived there, and learnt the rudiments of English. At the age of sixteen he was admitted into the Oriental Seminary, but

charity, English ladies, besides possessing many excellencies, distinguish themselves as active benefactresses,—as healers of suffering, reclaimers of the fallen, educators of the convicts, and ameliorating agents of helpless and rugged children." The hero comes back, and with the heroine and some other ladies, becomes engaged in philanthropic work.

1 For a detailed critical account of Akṣay Kumar Datta and his works, see an article of the present writer in *Śāradīyā Ānandabāzar Patrikā* 1361, pp. 209-14. Also see Brajendra Nath Banerji's monograph on Akṣay Kumār Datta in *Sāhitya-sādhak-caritamālā* no. 12. Brajendra Nāth's account is chiefly based on অক্ষয়চরিত by নকুড়চন্দ্র বিশ্বাস (Calcutta Ādi Brāhma-samāj Yantra. Bhādra 1294 B.S. =1887) and শ্রীযুক্ত অক্ষয়কুমার দত্তের জীবনবৃত্তান্ত। আর্য্যদর্শনের ভূতপূর্ব্ব সহকারী সম্পাদক শ্রীমহেন্দ্রনাথ বিদ্যানিধি সঙ্কলিত। কলিকাতা ১২৯২।

on account of the death of his father at Benares when he was about nineteen he had to give up his studies for want of adequate means. After he left school he became acquainted with Īśvar Chandra Gupta who encouraged him to contribute to his *Saṃbad-prabhākar*. Introduced to Debendranāth Ṭhākur by Īśvar Gupta, he joined the Tattvabodhinī Sabhā in 1839 (Pauṣ 11, Śaka 1761). Next year (Āṣāḍh 1, Śaka 1762) he became a teacher of the Tattvabodhinī Pāṭhśālā and taught geography and physics. In this connexion he wrote his *Bhūgol* (ভূগোল) in 1841 and *Padārtha-vidyā* (পদার্থবিস্তা) in 1846. When the school was removed to Bānsbeḍiā in the district of Hooghly, Akṣay Kumār declined to go there as its Head Master.[1] In the meantime in June 1842 he published, jointly with Prasanna Kumār Ghoṣ of Tākī, a monthly called *Bidyā-darśan*, of which, however, only six numbers appeared. When the *Tattvabodhinī Patrikā* was published on August 16, 1843 (Bhādra 1, Śaka 1765), Debendranāth appointed a Paper Committee for selection of contributions, which consisted of five prominent men like Īśvar Chandra Bidyāsāgar and Rājendralāl Mitra. Akṣay Kumār became its assistant secretary, but practically he edited the paper. In 1846 he became formally its secretary and continued as such for twelve years till 1855. The comprehensive object of the periodical is thus stated in one of its issues (Āṣāḍh, Śaka 1775): "পদার্থবিদ্যা, রসায়ন, প্রাকৃতিক ইতিবৃত্ত, নানা জাতীয় পুরাবৃত্ত, ধর্মনীতি, স্বদেশীয় সামাজিক ব্যবস্থা, জ্যোতিষ, শারীর স্থান, শারীর বিধান" প্রভৃতি বিষয়ের আলোচনা। Although Debendranāth did not agree with the positivist views of Akṣay Kumār[2] he generously admitted: তাঁহার ন্যায় লোককে পাইয়া তত্ত্ববোধিনী পত্রিকার আশানুরূপ উন্নতি করি। অমন রচনার সৌষ্ঠব তৎকালে অতি অল্প লোকেরই দেখিতাম। তখন কেবল কয়েকখানা

1 See p. 594 footnote 3

2 See above pp. 595.

সংবাদপত্রই ছিল। তাহাতে লোকহিতকর জ্ঞানগর্ভ কোন প্রবন্ধই প্রকাশ হইত না। বঙ্গদেশে তত্ত্ববোধিনী পত্রিকা সর্ব্বপ্রথমে সেই অভাব পূরণ করে। বেদ, বেদান্ত ও পরব্রহ্মের উপাসনা প্রচার করা আমার যে মুখ্য সংকল্প ছিল তাহা এই পত্রিকা হওয়াতে সুসিদ্ধ হইল।

But with regard to Veda, Vedānta and Parabrahma, Akṣay Kumār seriously disagreed with the views Debendranāth. He did not believe that the Veda or Vedānta were revealed and infallible. He did not admit the necessity of prayer, and his scientific mind ingeniously shewed by an equation:

industry = crop
prayer + industry = crop
therefore, prayer = 0.

Akṣay Kumār believed that Dharma is nothing but wisely following the laws of nature, and with this view he wrote his *Bāhya Bastur Sahit Mānab-prakṛtir Saṃbandha-vicār* (বাহ্যবস্তুর সহিত মানবপ্রকৃতির সম্বন্ধবিচার). Instead of uttering Mantras in Sanskrit on ceremonial occasions, Akṣay Kumār employed Bengali for the first time in the short-lived Brāhma Samāj established by Rakhāl Dās Hāldār at Kidderpore. He protested against the use of flowers, sandal-wood paste and offering of edibles (Naivedya) for the worship of Brahma; a move which met with the approval of Debendranāth.

Debendranāth had composed his *Brāhma-dharma Grantha* (1850-51) by selecting texts from Sāstra-works, but Akṣay Kumār preferred the laws of nature and way of reason to the dogmatic views expressed in the Śāstra. In one of his lectures[1] he expressly placed pure knowledge above sectarian belief and said: অখিল সংসারই আমাদের ধর্ম্মশাস্ত্র। বিশুদ্ধ জ্ঞানই আমাদের

[1] ধর্ম্মোন্নতি-সংসাধন বিষয়ক প্রস্তাব। কলিকাতা ১৭৭৭ (=১৮৫৫ খ্রীঃ অঃ): A Discourse on the Religious Improvement of Mankind, being the last of five speeches delivered at the Brahma Samaj at Bhowanipore in the year 1854. This lecture was published in the *Tattvabodhinī Patrikā*, Baiśākh No. 1777 śaka.

আচার্য্য। ভাস্কর ও আর্য্যভট্ট এবং নিউটন ও লাপ্লাস যে কিছু যথার্থ বিষয় উদ্ভাবন করিয়াছেন, তাহাও আমাদের শাস্ত্র। গৌতম ও কণাদ এবং বেকন ও কোম্ত যে কোন প্রকৃত তত্ত্ব প্রকাশ করিয়াছেন, তাহাও আমাদের শাস্ত্র। কঠ ও তলবকার, মুষা ও মহম্মদ, এবং যিশু ও চৈতন্য পরমার্থবিষয়ে যে কিছু তত্ত্ব প্রকাশ করিয়াছেন, তাহাও আমাদের ব্রাহ্ম ধর্ম্ম।

Akṣay Kumār formally adopted the Brāhma Dharma by signing the *pratijñā-patra* on December 21, 1850, but in his mental attitude he was much above mere sectarian belief. He wanted to place Brāhmaism on reason and scientific belief, but his view was not accepted ; and this led to a serious conflict. The *Indian Mirror* of July 15, 1877 rightly remarks: 'The negative, critical and destructive part of the work of the Brahmo Samaj, thirty years ago, was principally done by him.'

In 1853 an Ātmīya Sabhā[1] was established with Debendranāth as president and Akṣay Kumār as secretary. Its meetings were held in Debendranāth's residence, but through conflict of opinions the Sabhā was discontinued.

In connexion with the *Tattvabodhinī Patrikā* Akṣay Kumār came in intimate contact with Īśvar Chandra Bidyāsāgar. In the first half of 1855 Bidyāsāgar made arrangements for opening some model schools. For training of teachers for these schools a 'Normal' School became necessary. About this time Akṣay Kumār retired from the work of the Brāhma Samāj and its *Tattvabodhinī Patrikā*. In the meantime he had published two parts of *Bāhya Bastu* (1851, 1853), and *Chārupāṭh* also in two parts (1853, 1854)[2]. On Bidyāsāgar's recommendation he became principal of the Normal School on July 17, 1855 and held the post for three years. He suffered constitutionally from severe headache and had to

1 This is not a revival of Rāmmohan's Ātmīya Sabhā established in 1815 but a new association.

2 The third part was published in 1859.

resign in August 1858. In recognition of his services the Tattvabodhinī Sabhā granted a monthly subsistence allowance of Rs. 25/- which, to some extent, placed him above want. As income from his published works increased, he did not have to accept this allowance after 1862. Distressed by constant illness[1] he retired from the city and went to live in the village of Bally (বালিগ্রাম) on the bank of the river Hooghly, where he had purchased a bigha of land and built a house with an adjoining garden. After suffering from his malady for a long time he died there at the age of sixty-six on May 28, 1886 (Jyaiṣṭha 14, 1293 B.S.).

HIS WORKS

Akṣay Kumār's literary reputation rests chiefly upon his three principal works, all of which are, more or less, adaptations from contemporary English works.

(1) বাহ্যবস্তুর সহিত মানব প্রকৃতির সম্বন্ধ বিচার। ১ম ভাগ 1851, pp. 291 ; ২য় ভাগ 1852. তত্ত্ববোধিনী মুদ্রাযন্ত্রে মুদ্রিত। The object of the work is thus indicated by Akṣay Kumār himself in the preface to the first part : শ্রীযুক্ত জর্জ্জ কুম্ব সাহেব প্রণীত 'কান্‌সটিটিউশন আব ম্যান' নামক গ্রন্থে···তিনি নিঃসংশয়ে নিরূপণ করিয়াছেন, যে পরমেশ্বরের নিয়ম প্রতিপালন করিলেই সুখের উৎপত্তি এবং লঙ্ঘন করিলেই দুঃখ ঘটিয়া থাকে।···ঐ গ্রন্থের অভিপ্রায় সমুদয় স্বদেশীয় লোকের গোচর করা উচিত ও অত্যাবশ্যক বোধ হওয়াতে বাঙ্গলা ভাষায় তাহার সার সঙ্কলন পূর্ব্বক 'বাহ্যবস্তুর সহিত মানব প্রকৃতির সম্বন্ধ বিচার' নামক এক প্রস্তাব তত্ত্ববোধিনী পত্রিকাতে প্রকাশিত হইয়া আসিতেছে।···তদনুসারে মুদ্রিত ও প্রচারিত হইতেছে। Again in the preface to the second part : বিশ্বপতি যে সকল শুভকর নিয়ম সংস্থাপন করিয়া বিশ্বরাজ্য পালন করিতেছেন, তদনুযায়ী কার্য্যই তাঁহার প্রিয় কার্য্য ; এবং তাহার প্রতি প্রীতিপ্রকাশ পূর্ব্বক তৎসমুদায়

1 There is a mention of his illness in his *Dharma-nīti* (1856).

সম্পাদন করাই আমাদের একমাত্র ধর্ম্ম। এ পর্য্যন্ত কত প্রকার নিয়ম অবধারিত হইয়াছে এবং কিরূপেই বা সে সকল নিয়ম শিক্ষা করিতে সমর্থ হওয়া যায়, তাহা এই পুস্তকে যথাসাধ্য প্রদর্শিত হইল। Again (বাহ্যবস্তু, ২য় ভাগ. পৃঃ ৩-৪): সমুদয় মনোবৃত্তির প্রয়োজন রক্ষা করিয়া, এবং বুদ্ধিবৃত্তি ও ধর্ম্মপ্রবৃত্তির প্রাধান্য স্বীকার করিয়া তদনুযায়ী ব্যবহার করিলে সুখী ও স্বচ্ছন্দ থাকা যায়, আর অন্যথাচরণ করিলে অশেষবিধ বিষম ক্লেশে পতিত হইতে হয়।

Accordingly items discussed is this work are:

১ম ভাগে। প্রাকৃতিক নিয়ম; মনুষ্যের ভৌতিক, শারীরিক ও মানসিক প্রকৃতি; প্রাকৃতিক নিয়মানুযায়ী ব্যবহার-প্রণালী; মনুষ্যের সুখোৎপত্তির বিষয়; শারীরিক ও ভৌতিক নিয়ম লঙ্ঘনের ফল; শারীরিক সুস্থতা ও বলাধান; অন্নগ্রহণ; জ্যোতিঃ ও বায়ু সেবনাদি; শারীরিক শক্তি ও মানসিক বৃত্তিচালনা; শারীরিক নিয়ম লঙ্ঘন করিলে যে সকল অনিষ্ট হয় তাহার উদাহরণ; পিতামাতার গুণাগুণ যে সন্তানে বর্ত্তে তাহার বিবরণ; অল্পবয়স্ক, বৃদ্ধ, উৎকট রোগগ্রস্ত ও বিকলাঙ্গ ব্যক্তিদের বিবাহের অকর্ত্তব্যতা; নিকট সম্পর্কীয়ার পাণিগ্রহণের অনৌচিত্য, ভিন্ন জাতীয় কন্যা বিবাহ করার বৈধতা। মনুষ্যের প্রকৃতি নির্ণয় ও বাহ্যবস্তুর সহিত তাহার সম্বন্ধ নিরূপণ; দীর্ঘায়ুঃপ্রাপ্তি; প্রসব বেদনা; অবৈধ বিবাহের ফল; মৃত্যু। আমিষ ভক্ষণের অবৈধতা।

২য় ভাগ। ধর্ম্ম বিষয়ক নিয়ম লঙ্ঘন করিলে মনুষ্যের কত দুঃখ হয় তাহার বিচার। সামাজিক নিয়ম; প্রাকৃতিক নিয়মানুযায়ী দণ্ডবিধানের বিবরণ; নানাপ্রকার প্রাকৃতিক নিয়মের সমবেত কার্য্য; প্রাকৃতিক নিয়ম প্রত্যেক ব্যক্তির সুখজনক কি না; বিদ্যা ও ধর্ম্মের পরস্পর সম্বন্ধ বিচার। সুরাপান।

It is to be noticed that Akṣay Kumar commends vegetarian diet and writes against drinking; but it is doubtful if he himself complied with his own injunction. His friend Īśvar Gupta, therefore, wrote in ridicule:

আমিষ অবিধি বলে যে করেছে গোল।
সে এখন নিত্য খায় শামুকের ঝোল॥

নোদে শান্তিপুর ফিরে ফিরিয়া হুগলি।
শেষ করিয়াছে যত দেশের গুগলি॥
নিরামিষ আহারেতে ঠেকেছেন শিখে।
ঘুরিতেছে মাথামুণ্ড মাথামুণ্ড লিখে॥
কোথা তার বাহ্যবস্তু মানবপ্রকৃতি।
এখন ঘটেছে তার বিষম বিকৃতি॥...
মাংস মাছ বিনা আগে ছিল না আহার।
কিছুদিন করিলেন বিপরীত তার॥...
দায়ে পড়ে পূর্ব্ব ভাব ধরিলেন পিছু।
শুধু মাছ মাস নয় আগে আছে কিছু॥
সমুদয় ফুটে লেখা না হয় বিহিত।
মসলা চলেছে কত পানের সহিত॥
ছেড়ে দাও ছেলে খেলা ফেলে দাও "কুম"।
মাছ মাস ভাত খেয়ে সুখে দাও ঘুম॥
করো নাক ধুমধাম টুমটাম আর।
ছিঁড়ে ফেল বাহ্যবস্তু সে মত অসার॥

(2) চারুপাঠ in three parts. ১ম ভাগ ১৮৫৩; ২য় ভাগ ১৮৫৪; ৩য় ভাগ ১৮৫৯। As it was a popular text-book for a long time this work is perhaps better known. Most of it, especially its scientific articles, are compilations from English works. Some of its essays were published originally in the *Tattvabodhinī Patrikā* and *Saṃbād-prabhākar*. The essays, entitled স্বপ্নদর্শন and সুশিক্ষিত ও অশিক্ষিতের সুখের তারতম্য, were at one time much appreciated.

(3) ভারতবর্ষীয় উপাসক-সম্প্রদায় in two parts 1870, 1883. A great deal of pt. i was published originally in the *Tattva-bodhinī Patrikā*. The author himself admits that the substance of the work was derived from Horace Hayman Wilson's *Religious Sects of the Hindus* which had been published in the *Asiatic Researches* (vol. xi-xvii). But Akṣay Kumār

added much to it by his own researches. According to sects dealt with by each, a comparison would show:

Wilson—Baiṣṇab 21 + Śaiba 18 + Śākta 6 = Total 45
Akṣay Kumār—Baiṣṇab 99 + Śaiba 59 + Śākta 24
= Total 182.

Modern research has added new information, but as accounts of some of the sects are not available elsewhere, the value of Akṣay Kumār's work still remains.

Although suffering from his life-long malady, Akṣay Kumār laboured hard to complete the two parts. He had the intention of writing a third part, but he did not live to do it. In this work his chief object, apart from collecting rare information, was to demonstrate that religious truth in course of time takes different forms in different sects, and that Hindu religion was no exception.

Besides these works Akṣay Kumār also wrote (a) ধর্ম্মনীতি অর্থাৎ কর্ত্তব্যানুষ্ঠানবিষয়িনী নীতিবিদ্যা। 1856 (Magh 10, Śaka 1777). Pt. i. The author's preface states: ধর্ম্মনীতি প্রথম ভাগ প্রচারিত হইল। ইহা কোন গ্রন্থের অবিকল অনুবাদ নহে; নানা ইংরেজি গ্রন্থ অবলম্বন করিয়া লিখিত হইয়াছে। The work was written with the same object as the বাহ্যবস্তু, and the various topics dealt with are: শারীরিক স্বাস্থ্যবিধান, ধর্ম্মপ্রবৃত্তির উন্নতিসাধন, বহুবিবাহ, বাল্যবিবাহ ও অসবর্ণ বিবাহের আবশ্যকতা, বালকদিগের শিক্ষাপ্রণালী etc. Akṣay Kumār supports the move for remarriage of widows and expresses his disapprobation of বহুবিবাহ (polygamy) and বাল্যবিবাহ (child-marriage). The second part of the work does not appear to have been published. (b) ধর্ম্মোন্নতি সংসাধন বিষয়ক প্রস্তাব। কলিকাতা শক ১৭৭৭ (1855). It is a discourse on 'the religious improvement of mankind', being the last of five speeches delivered at the Brāhma Samāj at Bhawanipur in 1854. (c) প্রাচীন হিন্দুদিগের সমুদ্রযাত্রা ও বাণিজ্যবিস্তার। pp. 209. Edited with notes by Rajanīnāth Datta, son of the author, Calcutta 1901.

The reputation which Akṣay Kumār enjoyed in his own age as a writer of Bengali prose has been considerably diminished by later estimation. But among authors who wrote before the advent of Baṅkimchandra, he holds a definite place along with his contemporary Īśvar Chandra Bidyāsāgar. He was essentially an essayist who wrote on serious scientific and ethical subjects ; and for this he had to adopt a suitably elevated diction, which could not be always easy or properly literary. Compared with the diction of Īśvar Chandra it is less smooth and more Sanskritised. There is no particular proneness to the extravagance of compound words, but for expression of his subject-matter compound words could not always he avoided. For these reasons Akṣay Kumār's prose is not always pleasant to read, as Vidyāsāgar's prose is. But when sentiment and emotion, and not mere fact and reason, actuate him, his prose becomes vivid and forceful. We will cite here one instance from what he wrote about widow-remarriage in the *Tattvabodhinī Patrikā* (Chaitra 1776 B.S.):

যাঁহাদের দুঃখ দেখিয়া দয়ার উদ্রেক হয় না ও পাতক দেখিয়া অশ্রুধার আবির্ভাব হয় না, তাঁহাদের পরামর্শ জিজ্ঞাসা করিবার প্রয়োজন নাই। যাঁহার কিছুমাত্র হিতাহিত বোধ আছে, ও যাঁহার অন্তঃকরণে কস্মিন্‌কালে কারুণ্যরসের সঞ্চার হয়, তাঁহাকেই জিজ্ঞাসা করি—'বিধবা-বিবাহ প্রচলিত হওয়া উচিত কি না?' যিনি কোন নববিধবা তরুণী স্ত্রীকে সদ্যোমৃত প্রিয়পতির শোকে মোহে মুহ্যমানা, ধরাতলে লুণ্ঠমানা, অহর্নিশ রোরুদ্যমানা দর্শন করিয়া কাতর হইয়াছেন, তাঁহাকেই জিজ্ঞাসা করি—'বিধবা-বিবাহ প্রচলিত হওয়া উচিত কি না?' যিনি দেখিয়াছেন যে সাধ্বী রমণী মাসদ্বয় পূর্ব্বে স্বামিসমাদরে মানিনী ও গৌরবিণী বলিয়া স্ত্রীজনের নিকট প্রসিদ্ধ ছিল, সেই স্ত্রী মাসদ্বয় পরে একান্ত অনাথা ও নিতান্ত সহায়হীনা হইয়া দীনভাবে শীর্ণশরীরে সাশ্রুনয়নে দিনপাত করিতেছে এবং স্বামিসম্পর্কীয় বিদ্বেষিণীরমণীগণ কর্ত্তৃক নানাপ্রকারে নিগৃহীত ও পরিবারস্থ দাসদাসীগণ কর্ত্তৃক উপেক্ষিত ও অশ্রদ্ধিত হইয়া কাতরস্বরে

প্রতিবেশীগণের দয়ার্দ্রহৃদয় বিদীর্ণ করিতেছে, তাহাকেই জিজ্ঞাসা করি—'বিধবা-বিবাহ প্রচলিত হওয়া উচিত কি না?'...যিনি দেখিয়াছেন যে পবিত্র কুলে কোন কালে কলঙ্কস্পর্শের বাষ্পও শ্রুত হয় নাই সেই কুলের কোন যুবতী স্ত্রী অসহ্য বৈধব্যযন্ত্রণা সহ্য করিতে অসমর্থ হইয়া পিতৃকুল মাতৃকুল ও ভর্ত্তৃকুল চিরকালের মত কলঙ্কিত করিয়াছে এবং ভ্রূণবধজনিত অশুদ্ধ শোণিতসংস্পর্শে লোকমাতা বসুন্ধরাকে বারংবার অশৌচগ্রস্ত করিয়াছে, তাঁহাকেই জিজ্ঞাসা করি—'বিধবা-বিবাহ প্রচলিত হওয়া উচিত কি না?' কোন পতিবিহীনা পীড়িতা স্ত্রী তিথিবিশেষে পথ্যাভাবে নিতান্ত নির্জ্জীব হইল, তথাপি কেহ কণামাত্র আহারসামগ্রী অর্পণ করিল না, জলতৃষ্ণায় তালু ও কণ্ঠ পরিশুষ্ক হইয়া দুই চক্ষু স্থিরীকৃত করিয়া প্রাণত্যাগ করিল, তথাপি কেহ জলবিন্দু প্রদান করিল না, এই হৃদয়বিদারক ব্যাপার যিনি স্বচক্ষে প্রত্যক্ষ করিয়াছেন তাঁহাকেই জিজ্ঞাসা করি—'বিধবা-বিবাহ প্রচলিত হওয়া উচিত কি না?'

6. TĀRĀŚAṄKAR TARKARATNA

Tārāśaṅkar Chaṭṭopādhyāy Tarkaratna's works, especially his *Kādambarī*, occupy an important place in the history of Bengali prose of this period. They give us the best specimen of the socalled Sādhu-bhāṣā, chaste and dignified yet lucid and forceful. On the one extreme stands the extreme colloquialism of Peary Chand's *Ālāl*, on the other, the proper literary prose of Tārāśaṅkar. As Baṅkimchandra judiciously remarks: বাঙ্গালা ভাষার এক সীমায় তারাশঙ্করের কাদম্বরীর অনুবাদ, আর এক সীমায় প্যারীচাঁদ মিত্রের আলালের ঘরের দুলাল।

The exact dates of Tārāśaṅkar's birth and death are not known, but he was comparatively short-lived. He was born some time in the third decade of the 19th century and died towards the end of 1858. His birth-place was the village of কাঁচকুলি in the district of Nadiya, and his father's name Madhusūdan Chaṭṭopādhyāy. He studied for thirteen years in Calcutta Sanskrit College and attained 'eminent proficiency' in various branches of Sanskrit literature and philosophy.

His college certificate tells us he also made "fair progress in English Language and Literature". On the recommendation of Īśvar Chandra Bidyāsāgar he was appointed librarian of the college on November 12, 1851. He held the post till May 14, 1855, after which date he became sub-inspector of 'model' schools directly under Bidyāsāgar.

Tārāśaṃkar's *Kādambarī*[1] was published in 1854. The object and scope of the work are thus set forth by the author himself in its preface: সংস্কৃত ভাষায় কাদম্বরী নামে যে মনোহর গদ্য-গ্রন্থ প্রসিদ্ধ আছে তাহা অবলম্বন করিয়া এই পুস্তক লিখিত হইল। ইহা ঐ গ্রন্থের অবিকল অনুবাদ নহে। গল্পটি মাত্র অবিকল পরিগৃহীত হইয়াছে। বর্ণনার অনেক অংশ পরিত্যাগ করা গিয়াছে। It was not only a popular text-book for a long time but also (as Baṅkimchandra's remarks indicate) a model of vigorous literary prose to later writers. His less known *Raselās* (রাসেলাস)[2] was published some years later in 1857. It is a free adaptation of Samuel Johnson's (1709-84) work of the same name: ইংরেজী ভাষায় জনসন প্রণীত সুপ্রসিদ্ধ রাসেলাস গ্রন্থ অবলম্বন করিয়া এই পুস্তক লিখিত...ইহা ঐ গ্রন্থের অবিকল অনুবাদ নহে। But it was really based on a previous translation by Māhārājā Kālīkṛṣṇa Deb Bāhādur.

1 The title-page: Kadambari. Bengali by Tara Shankar Sharma. Calcutta. Printed at the Sanscrit Press 1854. কাদম্বরী। বাঙ্গালা অনুবাদ শ্রীতারাশঙ্কর শর্ম্ম প্রণীত। কলিকাতা সংস্কৃত যন্ত্রালয়ে মুদ্রিত। সংবৎ ১৯১১।

2 পৃ: ৮+২৪২ The title-page says: Rasselas. A free Translation by Tara Shankar Tarkaratna. রাসেলাস। Calcutta: The Sanskrit Press. College Square No. 1. Printed and published by Hurish Chandra Tarkalankar [the author's son] 1857. Tārāśaṃkar also revised Lawson's পশ্বাবলী (see above) for an edition published by Calcutta School Book Society in June 1852.

7. ĪŚVAR CHANDRA BIDYĀSĀGAR (1820-1891)

Īśvar Chandra Bidyāsāgar has left behind a short autobiographical sketch[1] which he did not complete but which gives an account of his early life, till the age of nine (1829) when he entered Calcutta Sanskrit College.

Īśvar Chandra Bandyopādhyāy Bidyāsāgar was born of a poor Brahman family on September 26, 1820 (Āśvin 12, Śaka 1742) in the village of Bīrasiṃha in the district of Midnapur (then under Dt. Hooghly). His father, Ṭhākurdās Bandyopādhyay who was by profession an orthodox priest, was reluctant to send his boy to school ; but he was at last persuaded to permit Īśvar Chandra to get admitted into Calcutta Sanskrit Collage at the age of nine (1829) Here Īśvar Chandra studied for twelve years and five months (till 1841) various branches of Sanskrit literature and philosophy. He also joined (1830) the class in English.

WHAT BIDYĀSĀGĀR DID FOR SANSKRIT EDUCATION

After leaving College Īśvar Chandra became 'Serishtadar' (Chief Paṇḍit) of the Bengali Department of the Fort William College on December 29, 1841, and held the post for four years and five months till April 3, 1846. He became Assistant Secretary of the Sanskrit College on April 6, 1846, but on account of difference of opinion with the Secretary Rasamay Datta he resigned on July 16, 1847. He was back again at Fort William College as head writer and treasurer. On December 4, 1850 Īśvar Chandra became professor of Sāhitya at Sanskrit College and then its Principal on January 22, 1851. It is not necessary for our purpose to mention the changes which he introduced in the teaching and management of the College[2] but some of them were daring and radical. Hitherto

1 বিদ্যাসাগর চরিত স্বরচিত। Published by Nārāyaṇ Chandra Bidyāratna, Calcutta September 1891.

2 For an account see Brajendra Nath Banerji's monograph on Īśvar Chandra Bidyāsagār in Sāhitya-sādhak-caritamālā no. 18, pp. 31-45.

only Brahman students were admitted, but he threw the College open to Kāyasthas in 1851 and to all castes in December 1854. He stopped the learning of the *Mugdha-bodha* by rote and himself wrote easier graduated grammars as well as Sanskrit primers by which the difficult classical language could be acquired roughly within three years. He made the teaching of English compulsory in 1853 and strengthened the English department. Instead of Sāṃkhya and Vedānta[1] he recommended the teaching of Mill's Logic[2]. His object in all this was introduction of modern knowledge ; but it appeared to him 'a hopeless task to conciliate the learned of India to the acceptance of the advancing science of Europe', for he found that they were 'a body of men whose long standing prejudices were unshakable'. These are indeed remarkable words from one who was himself an orthodox Paṇḍit.

BIDYĀSĀGAR AND BENGALI EDUCATION

Īśvar Chandra's efforts were more successful in the direction of Bengali education. It was realised by Sir Henry Hardinge that it was not through English or Sanskrit but through their mother tongue that people in general should acquire knowledge ; and Adam's Report had called attention to the miserable condition of the indigenous village schools, which taught the vernacular. Accordingly in October 1844 Hardinge directed the opening of 101 primary schools in various parts of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa. But his effort did not achieve much success for want of suitable text-books, teachers and supervisors. Frederick J. Halliday, who became Lieutenant Governor of Bengal in 1854, recorded in his Minute on vernacular education (March 24, 1854) that for want of competent teachers, the Pāṭhśālas had deteriorated and that

1 'That the Vedānta and Sāṃkhya are false systems of philosophy is no more a matter of dispute.'

2 'The study of Mill's work in the Sanskrit College is, I am of opinion, indispensable'.

for this reason it was necessary to establish some model schools, for which he recommended Bidyāsāgar's plan. After travelling widely Bidyāsāgar selected places where these model schools should be established. Under his guidance a ' Normal' school for the training of teachers was opened on July 17, 1855 at Calcutta Sanskrit College, with Akṣay Kumār Datta and Madhusūdan Bāchaspati as principals of upper and lower classes respectively. Bidyāsāgar opened five model schools in each of the following four districts, viz. Nadiya, Burdwan, Hooghly and Midnapore.

WOMEN'S EDUCATION

Before 1856 women's education was not considered by Government to be one of its obligations. Rādhākānta Deb's views, we have seen, were liberal enough, but he did not approve of sending girls to school, himself opening a girls' school in his own house for teaching English and Bengali. In the first half of the 19th century, therefore, women's education was of a meagre character and was confined chiefly to prosperous families.

In this connexion it will be convenient to trace here briefly the early attempts to promote women's education[1] in the first half of the 19th century. Here, as elsewhere, the Christian missionaries were the pioneers. In the Seminary of the Baptist Missionaries John Lawson and William Pearce, women's education appears to have begun in a small way. Through the effort of Mrs. Lawson and Mrs. Pearce who taught in this seminary, a Female Juvenile Society[2] was instituted in 1819 and a Juvenile School for girls was started.

1 See স্ত্রীশিক্ষা প্রচারের আদিকথা by the present writer in শনিবারের চিঠি, আশ্বিন ১৩৬২; পৃঃ ১৪৭৩-৭৫ ।

2 Peary Chand Mittra (*Life of David Hare*) informs us that this society was later on called Bengal Christian School Society—the Ladies Society mentioned below originated from it.

Of this school Gaur Mohan Bidyālaṃkār writes[1] in 1822: প্রথম ইং ১৮২০ সালের জুন মাসে শ্রীযুক্ত সাহেব লোকেরা এই কলিকাতায় নন্দন বাগানে যুবনাইল পাঠশালা নামে এক পাঠশালা করিলেন। আগে তাহাতে কোন কন্যা পড়িতে স্বীকার করিয়াছিল না, এইক্ষণে কলিকাতায় প্রায় পঞ্চাশটা স্ত্রীপাঠশালা হইয়াছে। তাহার প্রত্যেক পাঠশালায় ন্যূন সংখ্যাতে ১৬ জন কন্যা গণনা করিলেও ৮০০ কন্যার শিক্ষা হইতেছে। ইহাতে কাহারও কিছু ক্ষতি কিম্বা অখ্যাতি হয় নাই।

Beside the Juvenile School at Nandanbagan, the Society, as a matter of fact, had three girls' schools respectively at Gauribede, Janbazar and Chitpur, which were called Liverpool School, Salem School and Buckingham School in accordance with the names of the donors. By 1823 the number of schools opened by the Society was eight.

In the meantime in November 1821, on the request of Calcutta School Society, the British and Foreign School Society sent Miss Mary Anne Cooke to establish girls' schools in India. Rādhākānta Deb, who was one of the secretaries of the Calcutta Society, did not agree. He wrote: 'I fear none of the good and respectable families will give her access of their women's apartment, nor send their females to her school if organised'. As the School Society declined to help her, she was appointed[2] by the Church Missionary Society. By 1822 she was able to open eight girls' schools, with a total number of 219 students. By 1823 the total number of schools came up to 32, with 400 students.

After this in March 1824 the Ladies' Society for Native Female Education in Calcutta and its Vicinity opened with the assistance of the Church Missionary Society, undertook the management of its schools. It was at the instance of the

1 স্ত্রীশিক্ষা বিধায়ক। রঞ্জন পাবলিশিং হাউস, কলিকাতা ১৩৪৪, পৃঃ ৯। Gaur Mohan, a nephew of Jay Gopāl Tarkālaṃkār of Calcutta Sanskrit College, was a well known Paṇḍit of his time.

2 Priscilla Chapman: *Hindu Female Education*, London 1839, p. 81.

Ladies' Society, of which Lady Amherst was president, that the foundation-stone of a Central School for girls was laid on May 18, 1826 on the east corner of Cornwallis Square. Miss Cook in the meantime had married Isaac Wilson of Church Missionary Society. On April 1, 1828 Mr. and Mrs. Wilson took charge of this school with 58 girls on its rolls. This school in 1849 developed into the famous Bethune School. In this way women's education started in Bengal. According to Adam's *Report* the number of girls' schools in 1834 was 19.

But before 1856 we do not find women's education receiving Government's attention. On May 7, 1849 the Hindu Nārī Bidyālay was opened with 21 girl students under the personal patronage of John Elliot Drinkwater Bethune, who was at that time president of the Council of Education. It was located in the বৈঠকখানা building of Dakṣiṇā Rañjan Mukhopādhyāy at Simla (Calcutta).[1] It was resolved that a building for the school should be erected on Government land to the west of Cornwallis Square. Dakṣiṇā Rañjan donated Rs. 12,000/- for the purpose, Bethune himself offering to bear all additional expense. The foundation stone was laid on November 6, 1850. Later on in 1856 the school became a Government School under a committee of management of which Īśvar Chandra Bidyāsāgar became Secretary in August of the same year.

Beside Dakṣiṇārañjan and Īśvar Chandra, Bethune was also assisted by Madan Mohan Tarkālaṃkār of the Sanskrit College who was Īśvar Chandra's class-mate. His deep interest in women's education is indicated by his fairly long article on the subject[2] in the monthly journal *Sarva-śubhakarī*

1 On Dakṣiṇārañjan Mukhopādhyāy see Manmathanath Ghosh, *Rājā Dakṣiṇārañjan Mukhopādhyāy* (Calcutta 1324 B.S.).

2 This rare article has been reprinted by Brajendra Nath Banerji in Sāhitya-sādhak-caritamāla, vol. i, 1351, pp. 31-48. In this connection it should be noted that Kṛṣṇamohan Bandyopādhyāy in 1841 published his *Prize Essay on Native Female Education* (Calcutta : Ostell and Lepage, British Library, 1841).

(আশ্বিন শক ১৮৭২—১৮৫০). Of him Bethune wrote: Pundit Madan Mohan Tarkalankar, one of the Pundits of Sanskrit College......not only sent two daughters[1] to the school, but has continued to attend it daily to give gratuitious instruction to the children in Bengali, and has employed his leisure time in the compilation of a series of elementary Bengali Books[2] expressly for their use.

At his own expense and responsibility Bidyāsāgar, as Inspector of Schools, established thirty-five girls' schools (with a total of 13,000 students) within his own jurisdiction, between November 1857 to May 1858, in the districts of Hooghly, Burdwan, Midnapur and Nadiya. After a great deal of correspondence Government recouped the money spent in opening these schools, but declined to make a permanent grant.

As a representative of orthodox bigotry Īśvar Gupta did not support the move for women's education, and ridiculed Bethune and the girls educated in his school:

আগে মেয়েগুলো ছিল ভালো ব্রতধর্ম্ম করতো সবে ;
একা 'বেথুন' এসে শেষ কোরেছে, আর কি তাদের তেমন পাবে ?
যত ছুঁড়িগুলো তুড়ী মেরে কেতাব হাতে নিচ্চে যবে,
তখন 'এ বি' শিখে বিবি সেজে বিলাতী বোল কবেই কবে !
(এখন) আর কি তারা সাজি নিয়ে সাঁজ সেঁজোতির ব্রত গাবে ?
সব কাঁটা চামচে ধরবে শেষে, পিঁড়ি পেতে আর কি খাবে ?
(ও ভাই !) আর কিছু দিন বেঁচে থাকলে, পাবেই পাবে দেখতে পাবে !

On November 3, 1858 Bidyāsāgar retired as Principal of Sanskrit College, Calcutta, by handing over charge to E. B. Cowell.

In 1859 an institution called Calcutta Training School was opened at Sankar Ghosh Lane. By 1864 it developed into the Hindu Metropolitan Institution, and Bidyāsāgar was

1 Bhubanmāla and Kundamālā.

2 His *Śiśu-śikṣā*, pt. i, was dedicated to Bethune.

invited to take charge of its management. In 1879 it became a first-grade college.

THE QUESTION OF REMARRIAGE OF WIDOWS

Bidyāsāgar's interest in the education of women naturally led him to the question of remarriage of widows. In January 28, 1955 he published a short pamphlet of 26 pages entitled বিধবা বিবাহ হওয়া উচিত কিনা এতদ্বিষয়ক প্রস্তাব ; a second pamphlet on the subject with the same title was published in October 1855 (English translation of both these works was published under the title *Marriage of Hindu Widows* in 1856). He collected evidence from the Śāstras to support his contention, for he was under the impression that such evidence would be convincing. He was supported by the Young Bengal, the Tattvabodhinī group, some Paṇḍits like Tārānāth Tarkavāchaspati, some influential Jamindars like Jaykṛṣṇa Mukhopādhyāy of Uttarpara and some progressive Hindus. But custom and tradition proved too strong. He wrote in disappointment (গ্রন্থাবলি, সমাজখণ্ড পৃ: ১৮৫) : আমি আশা করিয়াছিলাম, কোন সামাজিক ক্রিয়াকে শাস্ত্রসম্মত বলিয়া প্রমাণ করিতে পারিলেই এ দেশের লোক তাহা অবনত মস্তকে গ্রহণ করিবে, কিন্তু আমার সে বিশ্বাস বিনষ্ট হইয়াছে। এ দেশে শাস্ত্র এবং দেশাচার এক পথে না চলিয়া পরস্পর বিভিন্ন পথে চলিয়াছে। But Bidyāsāgar's efforts gave an impetus to the movement until Act xv of 1856 was passed on July 26, 1856 to remove all legal obstacles to the marriage of Hindu widows. He was also opposed to polygamy as his two works (বহুবিবাহ রহিত হওয়া উচিত কি না এতদ্বিষয়ক বিচার, July 1871 and March 1873) bear testimony. An article in the Sarva-śubhakari Patrīka records his views on the subject of child-marriage to which he was also opposed. Mere usage Śāstric injuction or social custom did not deter him ; and he declared in clear language: আমি দেশাচারের নিতান্ত দাস নহি, নিজের বা সমাজের মঙ্গলের নিমিত্ত যাহা উচিত বা আবশ্যক বোধ হইবেক, তাহা করিব ; লোকের বা কুটুম্বের ভয়ে কদাচ সঙ্কুচিত হইব না।

Honours came to him unsolicited. On the New Year's day in 1880 he received the decoration of C.I.E. (Companion of the Order of the Indian Empire). Before this in July 4, 1864 the Royal Asiatic Society made him an Honorary Member.

His health had already broken down. He used to retire from the noise and bustle of Calcutta and stay in some healthy stations, chiefly at Karmatar where he had built a house. He died at Calcutta on July 29, 1891 (Śrāvaṇ 13, 1813 Śaka) at the age of seventy.

HIS WORKS

With the exception perhaps of his *Śakuntalā* (December 1854) and *Sītār Banabās* (April 1860) and some anonymous publications ascribed to him, most of the works of Bidyāsāgar consist of elementary text-books ; for his earnest desire to spread primary education made him subordinate his undoubted literary gifts to their production. They are in their chronological order :[1]

(1) বেতাল পঞ্চবিংশতি। 1847. pp. 163. "কালেজ আফ্ ফোর্ট উইলিয়ম নামক বিদ্যালয়ের অধ্যক্ষ শ্রীযুত মেজর জি. টি. মার্শাল মহোদয়ের আদেশে প্রসিদ্ধ হিন্দী পুস্তক অনুসারে লিখিত, কলিকাতা শ্রীযুত পি. এস. ডি. রোজারিও কোম্পানির মুদ্রাযন্ত্রে প্রকাশিত সংবৎ ১৯০৩"। This Hindi work was published from the College of Fort William in 1805. Bidyāsāgar also edited বৈতাল পচ্চীসী (Hindi) with an English introduction, January 1852.

(2) বাঙ্গালার ইতিহাস, ২য় ভাগ। 1848. "শ্রীযুত মার্শমান সাহেবের রচিত ইঙ্গরেজী গ্রন্থের শেষ নয় অধ্যায় অবলম্বন পূর্ব্বক সঙ্কলিত, ঐ গ্রন্থের অবিকল অনুবাদ নহে।" The work traces the history of Bengal from the accession of Sirajuddaulah to William Bentinck (1756 to 1835).

1 A full bibliography of Bidyāsāgar's published works will be found in *Bidyāsāgar-granthābalī* (Sāhitya), ed. Sunitikumar Chatterji, Brajendranath Banerji and Sajanikanta Das, Calcutta 1344 B.S. = 1937.

(3) জীবনচরিত। 1849. The work gives the biography of Galileo, Newton, Herschel etc, translated from Chambers' Biography.

(4) সংস্কৃত ভাষা ও সংস্কৃতসাহিত্যশাস্ত্রবিষয়ক প্রস্তাব। March 1853.

(5) চরিতাবলী। July 1856. It gives a sketch of the lives of Duval, Roscoe and other celebrities.

(6) মহাভারত। উপক্রমণিকা ভাগ। January 1860.

(7) শব্দমঞ্জরী। Bengali dictionary 1864.

(8) ভ্রান্তিবিলাস। October 1869. It depicts the story of Shakspeare's Comedy of Errors.

(9) বিদ্যাসাগর চরিত স্বরচিত। 1891. This incomplete autobiography sketches Bidyāsāgar's life up to his admission into Sanskrit College. It was published posthumously by his son Nārāyaṇ Chandra Bidyāratna.

(10) প্রভাবতী সম্ভাষণ। 1892.

Bidyāsāgar also published ঋজুপাঠ (pt. i. November 1851: pt. ii, March 1852 ; pt. iii, December 1851), an elementary Sanskrit reader ; সংস্কৃত ব্যাকরণের উপক্রমণিকা (1851) and ব্যাকরণ কৌমুদী (১ম ও ২য় 1853 ; ৩য় 1854 ; চতুর্থ ভাগ 1862), which are introductory Sanskrit grammars written in Bengali. Similar readers are his বোধোদয় (1851), কথামালা (1856) and আখ্যানমঞ্জরী (pt. i, 1863 ; pt. ii and iii, Nov. 1868) which give in lucid and elegant language stories from various sources. An edition of অন্নদামঙ্গল in two parts was published by him in 1847 ; "কৃষ্ণনগরের রাজবাটীর মূল পুস্তক দৃষ্টে পরিশোধিত"।

Bidyāsāgar also published an edition of the সর্ব্বদর্শন-সংগ্রহ (1853-1858), as well as of some of the Sanskrit classics, namely, রঘুবংশ (1853), কিরাতার্জ্জুনীয় (1853), শিশুপালবধ (1857), কুমারসম্ভব (1861), মেঘদূত (1869), উত্তররামচরিত (1870), অভিজ্ঞান-শকুন্তল (1871) and হর্ষচরিত (1883). They are based generally on MSS from the libraries Calcutta Sanskrit College and Bengal Asiatic Society. They are not critical editions as we understand them to-day, but they make the works accessible in a correct printed form.

Some works under the anonymity of কশ্চিৎ উপযুক্ত ভাইপোস্য and কশ্চিৎ উপযুক্ত ভাইপোসহচরস্য were written with considerable wit by Bidyāsāgar on the question of remarriage of widows and polygamy. They were অতি অল্প হইল (April 1873) and আবার অতি অল্প হইল (August 1873), also anonymous. These were in reply to Tārānāth Tarkavāchaspati who wrote in support of বহুবিবাহ. Also ব্রজবিলাস। যৎকিঞ্চিৎ অপূর্ব্ব মহাকাব্য। in reply to a lecture in Sanskrit by Brajanāth Bidyāratna of Nabadvīpa against remarriage of widows delivered at the হিন্দুধর্ম্মরক্ষিণী সভা of Jessore. Also রত্নপরীক্ষা অর্থাৎ শ্রীযুক্ত ভূবনমোহন বিদ্যারত্ন, প্রসন্নচন্দ্র স্থায়রত্ন, মধুসূদন স্মৃতিরত্ন এই তিন পণ্ডিতরত্নের প্রকৃত পরিচয় প্রদান। which was directed against remarriage of widows.

At the instance of the Bidyāsāgar Memorial Committee (বিদ্যাসাগর-স্মৃতি-সংরক্ষণ-সমিতি) of Midnapore the complete works of Bidyāsāgar have now been published in three volumes (সাহিত্য, ফাল্গুণ ১৩৪৪ ; সমাজ, ফাল্গুন ১৩৪৫ ; শিক্ষা ও বিবিধ, চৈত্র ১৩৪৬)[1]

To Īśvar Chandra Bidyāsāgar justly belongs the credit of creating literary prose in Bengali. We have seen that before him Mṛtyuñjay Bidyālaṅkār had sense of style, but what was nebulous in Mṛtyuñjay became properly shaped in Bidyāsāgar. He realised clearly that there was as much rhythm in good prose as in good verse, and that this rhythm is effected by a harmonious adjustment of the breath-group of words with their sense-group. Although short compound words are not excluded, we do not find the sesquipedalian affectation of the so-called Sādhu-bhāṣā ; on the other hand, the literary language is not debased to the level of the loose

1 Under the editorship of Suniti Kumar Chatterji, Sajanikanta Das and Brajendranath Banerji.

spoken tongue. Bidyāsāgar happily discovered the mean between the two, and evolved a norm which became established in literary prose. This is what Rabīndranāth means when he says[1]: বিদ্যাসাগর বাঙ্গলা ভাষার প্রথম যথার্থ শিল্পী ছিলেন। ...তিনিই সর্ব্বপ্রথম বাঙ্গলা গদ্যে কলানৈপুণ্যের অবতারণা করেন।... বিদ্যাসাগর বাঙ্গলা ভাষার উচ্ছৃঙ্খল জনতাকে সুবিভক্ত, সুবিন্যস্ত, সুপরিচ্ছন্ন এবং সুসংযত করিয়া তাহাকে সহজ গতি এবং কার্য্যকুশলতা দান করিয়াছেন। ...বিদ্যাসাগর বাঙ্গলা লেখায় সর্ব্বপ্রথমে কমা, সেমিকোলন প্রভৃতি ছেদ চিহ্নগুলি প্রচলিত করেন। This is the secret of the much praised sweetness and elegance of Bidyāsāgar's style. Nothing could be more true than what Baṅkimchandra says about it:[2] বিদ্যাসাগর মহাশয়ের ভাষা অতি সুমধুর ও মনোহর। তাঁহার পূর্ব্বে কেহই এরূপ সুমধুর বাঙ্গালা গদ্য লিখিতে পারে নাই. এবং তাঁহার পরেও কেহ পারে নাই।

8. RĀJENDRA LĀL MITRA (1822-1891)

Rājendra Lāl Mitra[3] was born on February 16, 1822 (Phālgun 6, 1228 B. S.) of a respectable and well-to-do Kāyastha family[4] at Śuḍo (শুঁড়ো), Calcutta. His great-grandfather, Pītāmbar, who was Vakil to the Nawab of Oudh and received the title of Rājā, came to reside in Calcutta in 1787-88. His grandfather Bṛndāban was Dewān to the Collector of Cuttack and a friend of Rāmmohan Rāy. His father Janamejaya knew Sanskrit and wrote some works on the Purāṇa and Saṃgīta[5].

1 বিদ্যাসাগর-চরিত।

2 Introd. to প্যারীচাঁদ গ্রন্থাবলী, ১২৯১।

3 On Rājendralāl's life see *Janmabhūmi*, Bhādra 1298 B. S. pp. 540-549; *Rājendralala Mitra* in *Express*, July 16, 1889 (published also as a pamphlet during his life-time); *Sāhitya-sādhak-caritamālā*, 2nd ed. pp. iii, 1945; S. K. De in শারদীয়া বসুমতী ১৩৬২, pp. 15-21.

4 Rājendralāl was the third of five sons of his father.

5 *Sāhitya Pariṣat Patrikā*, 1344 B.S. no. 1.

After three years (1832-34) at Kṣema Chandra Basu's Pathuriāghaṭā school and two years (1834-35) at Govinda Chandra Basāk's Hindu Free School, Rājendralāl became admitted into Calcutta Medical College on December 3, 1837 ; but on account of some difference of opinion with the European authorities of the College he left on May 12, 1841. After declining an offer of financial assistance from Dvārakānāth Ṭhākur in order to enable him to study medicine in England, he studied law for some time. But ultimately he turned to the study of oriental languages and antiquity as his chief occupation.

An opportunity for these studies was given by his appointment as secretary and librarian to the Bengal Asiatic Society in November 5, 1846, and he held this post till February 1856. After his resignation he was elected a fellow, and in June next he became a member of the Society's Council.

RĀJENDRALĀL'S WORKS

In this connexion Rājendralāl edited for the Bibliotheca Indica series of the Society twelve Vedic, Buddhist and Sanskrit works, namely Taittirīya Brāhmaṇa (in 3 vols. 1859, 1862 and 1890) and Āraṇyaka (1876), Gopatha Brāhmaṇa (1872).Taittirīya Prātiśākhya (1872),Aitareya Āraṇyaka (1876), Śaunaka's Bṛhad-devatā (1892), Agni-purāṇa (3 vols. 1873, 1876, 1879), Vāyu-purāṇa (in 2 vols. 1880, 1886), Kāmandakīyaka Nītisāra (1884), Caitanya-candrodaya Nāṭaka (of Kavikarṇapūra, 1854), Lalitavistara (1877) and Aṣṭasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā (1888). Although Rājendralāl's editions have now been superseded by more critical editions[1], yet as *editio princeps* they still retain their value. Rājendralāl published English translation of the Chāndogya Upaniṣad (1862), Yoga-sūtra of Patañjali (1883) and Lalitavistara (1886).

1 It appears that the Paṇḍits with whose assistance these works were prepared were not well versed in the various subjects included in their scope.

Appointed for the search of Sanskrit manuscripts, Rājendralāl was able to collect and examine 3156 manuscripts, of which he gave an account in the nine volumes of his *Notices of Sanskrit Manuscripts*, published between 1870 and 1883. He began a Descriptive catalogue of which, however, he was able to publish only one volume on Grammar manuscripts.[1] His notable works in this derection was his *Catalogue of Sanskrit Manuscripts in the Library of his H. H. the Maharaja of Bikaner*, and *Sanskrit Buddhist Literature of Nepal*.

The results of Rājendralāl's studies in oriental antiquities were also embodied in his three illustrated big volumes namely, *The Antiquities of Orissa* (in two volumes, '875. 1880), *Buddha Gaya* (1878) and *Indo-Aryans* in two volumes 1881). In search of material he had to travel to Orissa Buddha Gaya, but to travel and carry equipments in those pre-railway days in bullock carts over such long distances was not an easy task.

SEARCH, COLLECTION AND PUBLICATION OF MANUSCRIPTS

In the search and collection of manuscripts and editing unpublished texts on their basis, Rājendralāl was, thus, a pioneer. In this way he acquired extensive knowledge of a variety of subjects; and to listen to his uninterrupted[2] flow of talk, in which one could find new facts or new light on old facts, was itself an education. Unfortunately he had no Boswell to record his talks. It should also be noted that he was not only a scholar of wide knowledge but also, as his works as well as his reviews show, a critic in the modern sense of the term. Maxmüller writes truly of him: "He is a Pundit by profession, but he is, at the same time, a scholar

1 Taking up the work later Haraprasad Sastri gave an account of 14,686 manuscripts in 14 volumes.

2 As he was deaf of hearing he ignored all interruption and himself talked all the time on any proposed subject.

and critic in our sense of the word." Although recent discoveries have brought forth the new facts and upset many of Rājendralāl's findings, their value as pioneer effort can never be denied.

Rājendralāl's eminence as a linguist and antiquarian justly found recognition by learned societies in India and abroad. He became Vice-president (1861-65 ; again 1870-84, 1886-91) and then President (1885) of the Bengal Asiatic Society, where he had begun his active life on a small salary. The Royal Asiatic Society of England made him an Honorary Member[1] in 1865. In 1862 he was elected a Fellow of the University of Calcutta. Besides these, he was closely connected with the Central Text Book Committee, School Book Society, Tāttvabodhinī Sabhā (member of its so-called Paper Committee) and Vernacular Literature Society. The University of Calcutta conferred on him the honorary degree of LL. D. on March 11, 1876.

In the meantine on February 6, 1856 Rājendralāl had relinquished his salaried post of the Bengal Asiatic Society. The Society immediately made him a fellow, and in June of the same year a member of its Council. In March 1856 Government appointed him to be the Director of the Ward's Institution, which was established[2] as a centre for the education of minor boys of Zamindars.

Government conferred on him the distinction of Rai Bahadur in 1877 and the decoration of C.I.E. in 1878 and of Rājā in 1888.

Besides spread of education, Rājendralāl was interested in various social and intellectual movements of his time. He was connected with the British Indian Association from

1 Before 1864 this honorary distinction was conferred only on Kṛṣṇamohan Bandyopādhyāy and Īśvar Chandra Bidyāsāgar from Bengal.

2 At first the Institution was located in Raja Narasing's garden at Chitpur and then in the garden-house of Śrīkṛṣṇa Siṃha on the Upper Circular Road, Manicktola. It was closed in 1880.

its inception in October 1851, and for four years (1878-80, 1887-88, 1890-91) he was its Vice-president, and for another four years (1881-82, 1883-84, 1886-87, 1889-90) its President. In the second session of the National Congress[1] held at Calcutta on December 27 to 30, 1886, he became Chairman of its Reception Committee, and in his speech he declared in clear terms: "I behold in the Congress the dawn of a better and happier day for India."

HIS WORKS IN BENGALI

As Rājendralāl was chiefly engrossed in Oriental studies on which he wrote and published books and papers in English, he had not had much leisure to turn to Bengali. The few Bengali works that we have from him are of the character of text-books, and do not fully give evidence of his literary gift; but the days of such writing were not yet over. They are in their chronological order:

(1) প্রাকৃত ভূগোল অর্থাৎ ভূমণ্ডলের নৈসর্গিকাবস্থা-বর্ণনা বিষয়ক গ্রন্থ। Śaka 1776=1854 A.D., pp. 161+page of corrections. Written for the School Book Society (5th Ed. 1881). It was first published in the বিবিধার্থসংগ্রহ (২য় পর্ব্ব, সংখ্যা ১৯-২৩) in ten Prakaraṇas. In the preface (pp 1-2) the author distinguishes প্রাকৃত ভূগোল or Physical Geography from গণিত-ভূগোল and ব্যবহারিক ভূগোল: ভূগোল-বিদ্যার যে অংশ পৃথিবীর অবয়ব নিরূপণ করে, গ্রহদিগের সহিত তাহার পরস্পর সম্বন্ধ অনুসন্ধান করে, তাহার গতিবেগ ও তৎপ্রথা সাব্যস্ত করে, মানচিত্র নির্ম্মাণের প্রথা প্রদর্শন করে, ফলতঃ যে অংশ অঙ্কশাস্ত্রের সাহায্য ভিন্ন বোধগম্য হয় না,—তাহার নাম গণিত ভূগোল। দ্বিতীয়, যে অংশ জলস্থল-বিভাগ, সমুদ্র, হ্রদ ও নদীর ধর্ম্ম, জলের লবণাক্তভা, স্রোত, জোয়ার ও উষ্ণতার বিবরণ, পর্ব্বত, অধিত্যকা, উপত্যকা, ক্ষেত্র ও দ্বীপভেদ, বায়ুর গতি, ভূমিকম্প, নীহারস্ফোট, বৃষ্টির নিয়ম, ঋতুর ক্রম, দেশ ও ঋতুভেদে মনুষ্য-পশুপক্ষী-বৃক্ষভেদ,—ইত্যাদি পৃথিবীর প্রাকৃতাবস্থার বিবরণ-বিষয়ক, বিস্তার আলোচনা থাকে, তাহার নাম প্রাকৃত ভূগোল।

1 It was founded in 1885.

অপর যে অংশে রাজ্য, দেশ, নগর, গ্রাম, লোকসংখ্যা, বাণিজ্যাদি বিষয়ের বিবৃতি থাকে তাহার নাম ব্যবহারিক ভূগোল। There is a list of technical terms on pp. 155-61.

(2) শিল্পিক দর্শন অর্থাৎ প্রয়োজনীয় পদার্থকতিপয়ের প্রস্তুত করণের বিবরণ গ্রন্থ। Lessons on the Manufacture of various Articles in daily use, September 1860. pp. 170. Illustrated. It was written at the direction of বঙ্গভাষানুবাদ সমাজ and included in the গার্হস্থ্য বাংলা পুস্তক সংগ্রহ series. In this work there are directions for manufacturing Dacca muslin cloth, process for curing leather, and articles on coal-mine, paper, silk, salt, indigo, tobocco, iron etc. The author informs us: শিল্পশাস্ত্রের আদ্যোপান্তের সমালোচনা করিবার কিছুমাত্র আয়াস করা হয় নাই।

(3) শিবজীর চরিত অর্থাৎ যবনপ্রমর্দ্দক মহারাষ্ট্রীয় বীরপ্রধানের জীবনবৃত্তান্ত। November 1860, pp. 78. It was at first published in the বিবিধার্থসংগ্রহ (৪র্থ পর্ব্ব, সংখ্যা ৩৮ ; ৫ম পর্ব্ব, সংখ্যা ৫৬, ৫৯), and was included in the series mentioned above.

(4) ব্যাকরণ-প্রবেশ। অর্থাৎ বঙ্গভাষার ব্যাকরণের প্রথম উপদেশ। A catechism on elementary Bengali Grammar. 1862, pp. iv+70. In the preface we are informed that having undertaken a revision of Keith's Grammar at the direction of the School Book Society, the author found it unsuitable and himself wrote a fresh grammar. We are told: ইহা দ্বারা বালকদিগকে ব্যাকরণশাস্ত্রের স্থূল তাৎপর্য্য উপদেশ দেওয়া অভিপ্রেত।

(5) পত্রকৌমুদী নাম পত্রাদি লেখনের উপদেশক গ্রন্থ। 1863, pp. 100. The work was compiled jointly with W. S. Seton-Karr who was at the time a judge of the High Court. In the first part there are model letters such as should be written to গুরুজন, স্নেহভাজন, অধীনস্থ ব্যক্তি etc. We are informed: দ্বিতীয় খণ্ডে পাট্টা কবুলিয়ৎ প্রভৃতি সত্বসম্বন্ধীয় লেখন। তৃতীয় খণ্ডে জমিদারী ও অন্য হিসাব ; ও চতুর্থ খণ্ডে বিচারালয়ের প্রচলিত লেখন কএক খানির

আদর্শ সংগৃহীত হইয়াছে। The model letters of the last part were collected by Seton-Karr. In the preface to the work there is an account of the mode of ancient and modern letter-writing.

Besides these works we have: 'মেবারের রাজেতিবৃত্ত'; Prayer of St. Niersis Clajensis translated into Bengali and Sanskrit (1862, pp. 20) ; অশৌচব্যবস্থা (1873 pp. 92), and পাপীর পাগলামী বা মনের কথা (The Ravings of a Sinner, Thoughts on the Frailty of life and the Sinfulness of human nature, 1887, pp. viii + 26). But it is not necessary for our purpose to give an account of these works here.

It cannot be said that these works possess much value from the strictly literary point of view. We pass on, therefore, to the two monthly journals he published, in which will be found scattered some of Rājendralāl's best writings and reviews.

BIBIDHĀRTHA-SAṂGRAHA and RAHASYA-SAṂDARBHA

In 1851 was founded the Vernacular Literature Society (বঙ্গভাষানুবাদক সমাজ)[1] with which were connected some eminent men of the time like Rādhākānta Deb and Īśvar Chandra Bidyāsāgar. It was under the auspices of this Society that Rājendralāl published in October of the same year (Kārttik, Śaka 1773) an illustrated monthly journal and called it বিবিধার্থ-সংগ্রহ ।[2] This was indeed the first illustrated paper in Bengali.[3] The first seven Parvas were published between

1 In the first no. it is said: "বঙ্গভাষানুবাদক সমাজের আনুকূল্যে এই পত্র স্থাপিত হইল"।

2 বিবিধার্থ-সংগ্রহ। অর্থাৎ পুরাবৃত্তেতিহাস-প্রাণিবিদ্যা-শিল্প-সাহিত্যাদি দ্যোতক মাসিক পত্র। প্রথম পর্ব্ব ব্যাপ্টিস্ত-মিশন-যন্ত্রে মুদ্রিত। কলিকাতা শকাব্দ ১৭৭৪। In the preliminary advertisement of this paper it was said: ইংরাজী ভাষায় 'পেনি মেগজিন' নামক পত্রের অনুবর্ত্তিত এতৎপত্র।

3 The number of illustrations, mostly wood-cuts, is not negligible. In the first Parva there are 49 illustrations.

October 1851 and April 6, 1859 (Kārttik Śaka 1773 to Agrahāyaṇa Śaka 1783). Of these Rājendralāl was the editor of the first six Parvas (i.e. up to Chaitra, Śaka 1781). From the seventh Parva Kālīprasanna Siṃha edited the journal from Baiśākh to Agrahāyaṇa, Śaka 1783 (1861 A.D). The Vernacular Literature Society became amalgamated with Calcutta School Book Society in January 1862. To make up for the disappearance of the *Bibidhārtha-saṃgraha*, a fresh journal was started by the Society in February 1863. It was called রহস্য-সন্দর্ভ (*Rahasya-saṃdarbha*), and Rājendralāl was selected to be its editor. Its object is thus stated at the outset: এই মাত্র বক্তব্য যে পূর্ব্বে 'বিবিধার্থ-সংগ্রহ' নামক মাসিক পত্র যে উদ্দেশে বহুল পাঠকবৃন্দের মনোরঞ্জন করিত ইহাও সেই অভিপ্রায়ে প্রতিষ্ঠিত এবং তাহারই পদাঙ্কানুসরণার্থে সঙ্কলিত হইয়াছে। In the first number there is a brief statement of the subjects to be included within the scope of the journal: পুরাবৃত্তের আলোচনা, প্রসিদ্ধ মহাত্মাদিগের উপাখ্যান, প্রাচীন তীর্থাদির বৃত্তান্ত, স্বভাবসিদ্ধ রহস্য-ব্যাপার ও জীবন-সংস্থার বিবরণ, খাদ্যদ্রব্যের প্রয়োজন, বাণিজ্য-দ্রব্যের উৎপাদন, নীতিগর্ভ উপন্যাস, রহস্যব্যঞ্জক আখ্যান, নূতন গ্রন্থের সমালোচন প্রভৃতি। Rājendralāl was connected with the first six Parvas of the *Rahasya-saṃdarbha*[1] with effect from Māgh, Saṃvat 1919 to Āśvin, Saṃvat 1928.

Rājendralāl's speeches delivered on different occasions were collected together and published by Raj Jogeshur Mitter[2] in 1892. The speeches show Rājendralāl's wide interest in a variety of subjects.

Rājendralāl died, full of years and honours, at Calcutta on July 26, 1891.

1 For a list of interesting reviews and articles in the *Rahasya-saṃdarbha*, as well as in the *Bibidhārtha-saṃgraha* see S. K. De's article in the *Śāradīyā Basumatī* mentioned above.

2 Speeches by Raja Rajendralala Mitra LL.D., C.I.E. edited by Raj Jogeshur Mitter.

A SPECIMEN OF HIS PROSE

As a short specimen of Rājendralāl's Bengali prose we give here his brief but able account of humorous writing in Bengali (বিবিধার্থ সংগ্রহ, পঞ্চম পর্ব্ব, no. 60, Śaka 1780):

ভারতচন্দ্রের বিদ্যাসুন্দর কোন প্রধান পরিবারের দোষোদ্ভাষণের নিমিত্ত লিখিত হইয়াছিল; কিন্তু সাবক্ষেপ কাব্যের প্রধান অঙ্গ ব্যঞ্জনা দ্বারা অরুন্তুদভাষণ, তাহা তাহাতে না থাকা প্রযুক্ত ঐ কাব্য আমাদের উদ্দেশ্য নহে। তদনন্তর যথার্থ ব্যঙ্গ্যকাব্যের মধ্যে 'নববাবুবিলাস' নামক গদ্য পুস্তকের উল্লেখ করা কর্ত্তব্য। তাহা ত্রিংশধিক বর্ষ হইল একজন সুচতুর ব্যক্তি প্রস্তুত করেন। তাহাতে পিতার অমনোযোগে বালকের বিদ্যাভ্যাসের হানি হইলে স্ত্রৈণতা ও পানদোষে কি পর্য্যন্ত অনিষ্ট হইতে পারে, তাহা তোতারাম দত্তের পুত্র বাবু কেশবচন্দ্রের উপন্যাসে প্রোজ্জ্বলরূপে বর্ণিত হইয়াছে। যে সময় তাহা প্রস্তুত হইয়াছিল তৎকালে বর্ণিত বাবুর আদর্শ কলিকাতায় অপ্রাপ্য ছিল না। এই পুস্তকের আদর্শে অপর কোন রসোল্লাসি ব্যক্তি 'নববিবিবিলাস' নামক ব্যঙ্গ্য প্রস্তুত করেন। ভদ্র স্ত্রী কুলটা হইলে যে দুর্গতি হয় তাহারই বর্ণন করা তাঁহার অভিপ্রেত, এবং সে উদ্দেশ্য গ্রন্থে উত্তমরূপে সিদ্ধ হইয়াছিল। কিন্তু আক্ষেপের বিষয় এই যে, ঐ উভয় গ্রন্থকার উদ্দেশ্যের অনুরোধে এবং কিয়দ্বা সহৃদয়তার অভাবে আপন২ গ্রন্থ অশ্লীলতায় লিপ্ত করিয়াছেন। ...অতঃপর সুবিখ্যাত ভবানীচরণ বন্দ্যোপাধ্যায় কোন দোষী পরিবারের নিগঞ্জনার্থে দূতীবিলাস নামে একখানি কাব্য প্রস্তুত করেন। তাহাতে অন্যান্য বাঙ্গালী ব্যঙ্গ্যকাব্যের আদর্শে অনেক জঘন্য অশ্লীলতা আছে, অধিকন্তু তাহার কৃতিত্ব যৎসামান্য মাত্র। তৎপরে কএক বৎসরের মধ্যে উল্লেখের উপযুক্ত কোন ব্যঙ্গ্যকাব্যের প্রকাশ হয় নাই। পাঁচ বৎসর হইল মাসিক পত্রিকা নামে এক ক্ষুদ্র সাময়িক পত্রে 'আলালের ঘরের দুলাল' শিরোনামে কএকটি প্রস্তাব প্রকটিত হয়। তাহা তদনন্তর সংশোধিত ও প্রকৃষ্টীকৃত হইয়া পুস্তকাকারে প্রকাশিত হইয়াছে। ঐ প্রবন্ধের আদর্শ নববাবুবিলাস, কেবল বাবুবিলাসের অশ্লীলতা তাহাতে নাই, এবং নব্য শ্লেষবাক্যে বাবুবিলাস হইতে প্রোজ্জ্বল হইয়াছে।...অধুনা নাটকের সম্যক্ সমাদর হইতেছে।...

অতএব বর্ত্তমানের কুপ্রবৃত্তি সকল নাটক দ্বারা সুন্দর তিরস্কৃত হইতে পারে, এই বিবেচনায় শ্রীযুক্ত মাইকেল মধুসূদন দত্তজ 'একেই কি বলে সভ্যতা' নামে একটি ক্ষুদ্র প্রহসন প্রকটিত করিয়াছেন। তাহার উদ্দেশ্য নববাবুদিগের পানাসক্তির নিগঞ্জন ; এবং তাহা প্রকৃষ্টরূপেই সিদ্ধ হইয়াছে। 'শর্ম্মিষ্ঠা' নাটকের সমালোচনে[1] আমরা দত্তবাবুর ক্ষমতা বিষয়ে যাহা কিছু লিখিয়াছিলাম, তাহা উপস্থিত প্রহসনে সর্ব্বতোভাবে সপ্রমাণিত হইয়াছে। অধুনা আমরা মুক্তকণ্ঠে স্বীকার করিতে পারি যে নাটক-রচনায় দত্তজ বাঙ্গালীর মধ্যে অদ্বিতীয় হইয়াছেন।...এক্ষণে তিনি ত্বরায় বঙ্গীয় একজন প্রধান কবি বলিয়া গণ্য হইবেন, এমত সম্ভাবনা হইয়াছে। Again Rājendralāl's criticism of Rāmnārāyaṇ's *Veṇī-saṃhāra*[2] gives a just estimate of the tendency of the Bengali drama: রঙ্গভূমিতে পয়ারে রোদন, ত্রিপদিতে রাগ বা চৌপদিতে বিরক্তি প্রকাশ করিলে হাস্যাস্পদ হইতে হয়।[3]...ফলতঃ নাট্যশালায় পয়ারাদিতে বীররসাশ্রিত নাটকের অভিনয় করিলে মাদৃশ অকিঞ্চিৎকরদিগের বিবেচনায় সমুদায়ই পাঁচালির অনুকরণ হইয়া উঠিবে।...সংস্কৃত কবিতা আমাদের পয়ারের তুল্য নহে, সুতরাং উভয়ের তুলনা হইতে পারে না। Again in a review of Kālīprasanna Siṃha's *Vikramorvasī* he alludes laughingly to rich people's getting books written in their names by needy authors: রচনাচাতুর্য-দৃষ্টে প্রতীত হইতেছে যে ইদানীন্তন বিষয়ী গ্রন্থকারদিগের ন্যায় প্রশংসিত সিংহ মহাশয় ভট্টাচার্য্যদিগের সাহায্য গ্রহণ করেন নাই, যেহেতু ইহাতে নস্যের গন্ধমাত্র বোধ হয় না।

Rājendralāl was undoubtedly one of the towering personalities of the first half of the 19th century, and enjoyed great reputation for his learned writings. But posterity does not appear to have endorsed this estimate. His writings bear

1 পঞ্চম পর্ব্ব ৫৮ সংখ্যায়। This discerning estimate of Madhusūdan's ability is a striking evidence of Rājendralāl's critical power.

2 ৪র্থ পর্ব্ব, ৪১ সংখ্যা, ১৭৭৯।

3 This appears to allude specially to Nandakumār Kaviratna's *Śakuntalā*.

the stamp of a multifariously learned and well-stored mind, but he was principally an essayist and antiquarian. He wrote brilliantly in English, but his literary gift did not find its adequate expression in Bengali. On account of its weighty subject-matter it should have been weighty and impressive, but it is halting and clumsy when it is compared with the easy flow and elegance of the contemporary prose of Bidyāsāgar. Perhaps divergence of subject-matter partly explains this difference, but this cannot be the entire explanation. There is, however, no stamp of English on his Bengali diction; on the contrary it leans more towards Sanskrit. Nevertheless, it is adequate for the expression with clarity and force of what he wants to say and for his descriptive or factual matter.

Rājendralāl did not receive from posterity the same approbation as he received from his contemporaries. One of the reasons for this, as Rabīndranāth points out, is perhaps the fact that the amount and value of his contribution in Bengali were not extensive enough even for his time. He has not been able to leave behind any substantial work which could have endured; the periodical pages of the *Bibidhārtha-saṃgraha* and *Rahasya-saṃdarbha* were the receptacle of all his writings. But it cannot be denied that he occupies an important place in the culture-history of his time.

CHAPTER VI

JOURNALISM

We have already dealt with the following periodicals of the first half of the 19th century[1], namely, *Digdarśan* (April 1818), *Samāchār-darpaṇ* (1818-41), *Bengal Gezette* 1818), *Saṃbād-kaumudī* (1821-34), *Brāhmaṇ-sebadhi* or *Brahmunical Magazine* (1821), *Samāchār-chandrikā* (1822-53), *Bangadūt* (Bengali edition of *Bengal Herald*, 1829-1832, 1839), *Saṃbād-bhāskar* (March 1839), *Sambād-rasarāj* (Nov. 29, 1839), and *Saṃbād-prabhākar* (1831-33, 1836-1868). These are practically all the important periodicals of this period, and it is hardly necessary to deal with the minor publications. The *Saṃbād-timira-nāśak* was licensed to Kṛṣṇamohan Dās in August 21, 1823; it lasted for several years till 1837 ; it was an organ of the conservative society. We need mention here in addition the *Saṃbād-sudhākar* (Feb. 23, 1831), *Saṃbād-sabhā-rājendra* (March 7, 1831) and *Jñānānveṣaṇ* (June 18, 1831).

1 For a detailed account see Brajendranath Banerji, *Bāṅglā Sāmayik Patra*, Ranjan Publishing House, 1346 B.S.

CHAPTER VII

EARLY BENGALI DRAMA AND THEATRE
(1795-1857)

The Bengali theatre was born in Calcutta as early as 1795, but it was an isolated episode. It was opened by Gerasim Lebedeff. Lebedeff was a Ukraine peasant who visited London in the latter part of the 19th century. He came to Madras in the capacity of a bandmaster, and in 1787 arrived in Calcutta, where he appears to have picked up Sanskrit, Bengali and Hindustani. He published in London in 1801 a Hindustani Grammar, which is a curious production and which is entitled 'A Grammar of the Pure and Mixed East Indian Dialects, arranged according to the Brahmenian system of the Shamscrit Languages'. On the title-page he gives a quotation from the *Bidyāsundar*; and in the preface, which contains his autobiography, he states he wrote several Bengali plays, one of which was acted with great success on November 27, 1795. He does not mention the name of any of his Bengali plays. From old Calcutta publications it appears that a theatre was opened by Lebedeff in 'Doomtolla' with the permission of the Governor-General in 1795. The locality of Doomtolla has not yet been identified. Some say that it was a street off Old China Bazar Street, while others think that it was the name of a locality at the opening of the 'Cossitolla' (or what is left of Bentinck Street of to-day) and was so named in those days on account of the jail and gallows situated there. The theatre was advertised to open with a play entitled 'The Disguise', the characters of which were to be of both sexes and which was to commence with an Indian Serenade and scenes decorated "in the Bengalee style". This is probably the *Disguise* which was written by Richard Paul Jaddrell (1745-1831)[1]. Lebedeff also appears to have

1 See Rabindra Kumar Dasgupta, প্রথম বাংলা নাটক in কথাসাহিত্য

translated another English play, entitled "Love is the Best Doctor" (is it an adaptation of Moliere's well-known farce?), into Bengali. He subsequently became 'Theatrical Manager to the Great Moghul', and returned to England in 1801. He was later sent to Russia by the London Ambassador, was employed in the Russian Foreign Office and subsidised by the Russian Government in founding a Sanskrit Press. He died in 1815.

'The Colly Raja's Juttra' (কলিরাজার যাত্রা নাটক) is sometimes mentioned as the next play that was enacted ; but from reviews published in the *Saṃbād-kaumudī* (no. 8) and *Calcutta Journal* (February 1, 1822), it appears to have been a Yātrā of a modern type and not a drama. Nearly forty years lie between the first staging of a Bengali play (mentioned above) and the second, which occurred in 1833 on a temporary stage set up by Nabīn Chandra Basu in his own house at north Calcutta (Shambazar),[1] but which did not last for more than a few years. It enacted some four or five Bengali plays during the year it was started. The staging of a dramatic version of the Bidyāsundar story is specially mentioned.[2] One notable feature of this stage was that "the female parts" were "almost exclusively performed by Hindu women."

The actual history of the Bengali Theatre does not begin till 1857, when three private theatrical parties appear to have sprung up in different parts of north Calcutta. A year later, in 1858, came the better known Belgatchia Theatre, but it staged only one drama, a Bengali version of *Rātnāvalī*, and came to an abrupt end in 1861 on the untimely death of one

xiii, no. 3, Pauṣ 1368 B.S. For an account of the gorgeous enacting of the play see Brajendranath Banerji in *Modern Review*, October 1931, pp. 385-87.

1 On the site of the present Shambazar Tram Depot.

2 For an account given in the *Hindoo Pioneer* (a weekly started by the *alumni* of the Hindu College) quoted *in extenso* see Brajendra Nath Banerji, *Early History of the Bengali Theatre* in *Modern Review* October 1931, pp. 389-90.

of its princely patrons. This history of the theatre falls chronologically outside our period,[1] but here we shall briefly indicate some of its salient features.

This was the age of amateur private theatricals ; and for the next ten years more than half a dozen such parties came in succession, each having a short-lived existence. Although set up in private houses and meant for privileged classes, they yet succeeded in staging some of the best productions of contemporary playwrights, and drew full houses. The casualness of their performances, however, and the limited seating capacity soon led to a demand for a public theatre, which was at last opened with a modest stage under the name of the National Theatre on December 7, 1872 by one such amateur party, namely, the enterprising Baghbazar Amateur Theatre, later called the Shyambazar Nāṭya-samāj. The National Theatre became the precursor of the regular public stage in Bengal which, in spite of many vicissitudes, has continued up to the present day, through the once famous Bengal, Great National, Star, Minerva, Emerald, Kohinoor and Manomohan theatres.

The Bengali Theatre, like Bengali drama, is thus a creation of modern times, and partakes of all the main features of the modern stage. But it came into existence at a time when Bengal was passing through an age of uncertainty and transition. Diverse and conflicting influences were active. The rich tradition of the older Sanskrit theatre had vanished, but there was a revival of interest in Sanskrit plays. We find, therefore, that regular dramatic performances opened on the different Bengali stages of 1857 with a translation of *Abhijñāna-śakuntala* of Nanda Kumār Rāy, and an adaptation

1 For an account of early dramatists and their works, see the present writer's *Nānā Nibandha* pp. 131-232, which gives a detailed account of the plays of Tārācharaṇ Sikdar,(*Bhadrārjun*),of Harachandra Ghosh (*Bhānumatī-cittabilās* 1853, *Chārumukh-cittaharā* 1864) and *Kaurab-biyog* 1858); of Kālīprasanna Siṃha's plays and the dramas of Rāmnārāyaṇ Tarkaratna.

of *Veṇī-saṃhāra* by Rām Nārāyaṇ Tarkaratna. As has been mentioned, the only drama staged by the Belgatchia Theatre in 1858 was a version of *Ratnāvalī*. Other classical masterpieces, like *Vikramorvaśī* and *Mālatī-mādhava*, followed on other stages. This was presumably because original Bengali plays were not available. But the earlier Bengali plays, when they came to be written, not only utilized Sanskrit mythological subjects, but also retained some of the characteristics of the Sanskrit drama like *nāndī* (a blessing pronounced as a prologue) and its act division. Even Madhusūdan Datta, who emphatically declared his intention 'to throw off the fetters forged by a servile admiration of everything Sanscrit', translated *Ratnāvalī* into English and betrayed an unmistakable influence of Sanskrit by his retention of the *vidūṣaka*, the jocose companion and confidential friend of the hero of a play, and by the scene of Padmāvatī's union with the king which he depicted on the model of *Śakuntalā*. The Bengali theatre, even if it did not accept the technique and tradition, could not, at least in its earlier phases, entirely escape the general influence of Sanskrit drama, while, in its later phases, it eagerly utilized the vast possibilities of dramatic themes which Sanskrit literature and mythology afforded.

But there also existed the traditional Yātrā as a semi-dramatic form of popular amusement. It had, however, declined in tone and temper and could hardly satisfy the new-born taste of the educated Young Bengal. Although greatly influenced by it, the Bengali theatre did not, as a matter of fact, grow out of the Bengali Yātrā, nor did the demand for the theatre come from the class which still patronized the Yātrā. It is not surprising, therefore, that in the preface to his *Ratnāvalī*, Rām Nārayaṇ Tarkaratna, himself an orthodox Paṇḍit, should speak in contemptuous terms of the popular Yātrā and vote in favour of the new drama based on English and Sanskrit models. As the same time, it must be said that some of the peculiar features of the Yātrā, such as its overflow of song and dance, its long drawn-out theme, its predi-

lection for declamation, rhetoric and irrelevant farcical episodes, continued to manifest themselves throughout the history of the Bengali theatre down to the days of Girish Chandra Ghosh and Kshirod Prasad, and even up to the present time.

But there can be no doubt that the origin of the Bengali theatre is to be sought in the desire for a less archaic form of amusement felt by a generation which, under the new system of English education, had their taste developed for a theatre of the European type. The Young Bengal, who had studied European literature with something of the same newly awakened interest as inspired Renaissance scholars to study Greek and Latin, had as much enthusiasm for everything new as contempt for everything old. The English play-houses of Calcutta did not entirely satisfy them. What they did at first, therefore, was not to create a Bengali theatre, as it was not possible to do so in the absence of Bengali plays, but to organize amateur English theatricals in which Shakespeare and English translations of Sanskrit classics were staged. It was these amateur theatricals of an alien kind which, between 1831 and 1855, were the real forerunners of the Bengali stage which followed in their wake.

From these antecedents and background will be understood the general trend and characteristics, as well as the strength and weakness, of the Bengali theatre as it grew. There was no question of the model to be followed. Bengal simply adopted the mid-Victorian stage with all its accessories of painted scenery, costume and make-up, but fortunately with a genuine love of the drama and of amateur acting as an art.

The Bengali theatre revealed at the outset a more healthy tone and greater artistic endeavour because of the presence in it of educated and enthusiastic young men who knew what they were doing. The influence of the decadent Yātrā, no doubt, persisted, but the initial influence of the Sanskrit drama was healthy, while European examples were eagerly seized

and skilfully adapted. A passion for music was still retained by frequent infusion of songs, partly on the Shakespearean model, but chiefly through the influence of the Yātrā. With admirable energy the Bengali theatre attempted all kinds of stage-craft and experimented in all types of plays. The idea of romantic tragedy came from Shakespeare, although certain exaggerations were bound to creep in; while the English tragi-comedy, light opera, shrewd comedies of manners and loose farcical productions were also cultivated. There never was a real conflict between Sanskrit and English models; and, side by side, Kālidāsa and Shakespeare found a place of honour. But, in the true spirit of the Renaissance, materials were exploited from all possible sources. With a real power of assimilating foreign influences, a high standard was usually maintained and the best features of the Western theatre reproduced in a new form.

Passing through an initial stage of Sanskrit and English adaptations, the types of plays produced included mythological and saint plays (a prominent feature of the Yātrā), dramas of romance and love, historical and social tragedies, satirical sketches of contemporary manners and patriotic historical plays of heroic sacrifice. The Bengali theatre was fortunate in having a remarkable series of actor-dramatists and a large number of actors and actresses who have lent their names to the creation of a living histrionic tradition.

But many drawbacks still lingered. The crude stage of the last century, its plays of inordinate length, its love of spectacular shows, its dazzling oriental costume, painted scenery, brilliant light and noisy concert, were slow to disappear. The excess of song and dance introduced in all possible contexts to the accompaniment of slipshod modern tunes and the inevitable harmonium, the frequent intrusion of purposeless farcical interludes, the preference for blood-and-thunder tragedies with their interminable rant and rhetoric, the relishing of mythological or semi-religious plays

which possess more sentiment than action—all these still remained.

In spite of some good actors, the general standard of acting, with its tendency towards declamation and strained gesticulation, did not always reach a high level. Although actresses are said to have figured in the early theatre of Gerasim Lebedeff and Nabīn Chandra Basu, the employment of men for female rôles continued down to the time of the National Theatre, until women actors were introduced on the public stage by the Bengal Theatre.

It is the far-reaching reforms of Śiśir Kumār Bhāduri, himself a brilliant professional actor and man of taste and culture, that in recent years raised the tone and temper of the Bengali theatre. To this effort should be added the refining influence of Rabindranath Tagore. We have now a better type of acting, plays of not more than three hours' duration, less song, dance and low comedy of the Yātrā type, shorter scenes and more brisk dialogue, and more appropriate dress and scenery which avoid anachronisms and absurdities.

So far as circumstances permit, the Bengali theatre has been, and still is, the best in India; but deficiencies still remain. Stage-craft is not yet up to the mark; and much is still desirable in the way of lighting devices, colour schemes, and scenic effects. In some theatres, again, there is not only a complete disregard of the demands of art, but also of the comforts of the audience who are accommodated in poorly equipped and often unclean play-houses.

These deficiencies, however, would not have mattered much had there not been in recent times an unfortunate dearth of good plays and good actors. The stage-quality of the majority of plays is poor because the authors possess little idea of stage-technique and even less perhaps of the dramatic possibilities of their themes. While the ordinary actor is unwilling to go through a course of severe apprenticeship, good actors are now being lured away by the cinema which they find more lucrative. We have had several good

actresses but, generally speaking, the class from which they are recruited and the little education that they possess make it difficult to train them in the ideas of life and society of which they have hardly any direct knowledge.

But the greatest difficulty is that the cinema, being today a much better commercial venture, takes away all the money and leaves little for the theatre, which can never disregard artistic requirements and proceed entirely on a commercial basis. It is useless to put all the blame on the unthinking playgoers; for the average playgoer, however faulty his taste is, loves a good play when it is properly produced. But an artistic success need not necessarily be a commercial success. The Bengali theatre appears to be doomed unless enough money is forthcoming to effect the necessary improvements and enable it to insist upon a high standard irrespective of commercial gain.

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